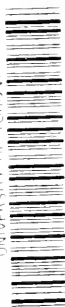


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CLASSICAL

THE ECLOGUES AND  
GEORGICS OF VIRGIL  
TRANSLATED BY  
T. F. ROYDS, M.A.

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ROMANCE



IN TWO STYLES OF BINDING, CLOTH, FLAT BACK, COLOURED TOP, AND LEATHER, ROUND CORNERS, GILT TOP.

LONDON: J. M. DENT & CO.  
NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO.



THE  
SAGES  
OF OLD  
LIVE  
AGAIN  
IN US  
GLANVILL



*The* ECLOGUES  
& GEORGICS  
OF VIRGIL  
TRANSLATED  
INTO ENGLISH  
VERSE BY ©  
T·F· ROYDS.



LONDON: PUBLISHED  
by J·M· DENT · & · CO  
AND IN NEW YORK  
BY E·P· DUTTON & CO



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RICHARD CLAY & SONS, LIMITED,  
BREAD STREET HILL, E.C., AND  
BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.

“And art thou then that Virgil, that well-spring  
From which such copious floods of eloquence  
Have issued?” I with front abash’d replied :  
“Glory and light of all the tuneful train !  
May it avail me, that I long with zeal  
Have sought thy volume, and with love immense  
Have conn’d it o’er. My master thou, and guide !”

CARY'S *Dante*.



## INTRODUCTION

“Thou that singest wheat and woodland,  
Tilth and vineyard, hive and horse and herd ;  
All the charm of all the Muses  
Often flowering in a lonely word ;  
Poet of the happy Tityrus  
Piping underneath his beechen bowers ;  
Poet of the poet-satyr  
Whom the laughing shepherd bound with flowers.”  
TENNYSON.

“Throughout the Middle Ages Virgil was a beneficent wizard, a romance-writer and a sorcerer, his name recurring strangely among all the greatest names of history or fable. To the scholarship of the Renaissance he became a poet again, but still Prince of poets, still with something of divine attributes. For us, who inherit from all these ages, he is the gathered sum of what to all these ages he has been. But it is as a voice of Nature that he now appeals to us most ; as a voice of one who in his strength and sweetness is not too steadfastly felicitous to have sympathy with human weakness and pain. Through the imperial roll of his rhythm there rises a note of all but intolerable pathos ; and in the most golden flow of his verse he still brings us near him by a faint accent of trouble. This is why he beyond all other poets is the Comforter ; and in the darkest times, when the turmoil within or around us, *confusæ sonus urbis et illætabile murmur*, seems too great to sustain, we may still hear him saying, as Dante heard him in the solemn

splendour of dawn on the Mountain of Purgatory : " My son, here may be agony, but not death ; remember, remember !"—J. W. MACKAIL.

THE earlier and later Virgil of the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics* has never yet quite reached his mark in English. It is easy for a great narrative and heroic poem, dealing with a consummate epic theme, to triumph over a foreign tongue. It is much harder for a set of select pastorals, or for writings like the *Georgics*, that depend on the grace, imagination, and style of their writer, to be made really effective and ideally alive in translation. But in reading the *Æneid*, whether in Dryden's or some more modern version like Fairfax Taylor's, if we have anything at all of Tennyson's sense of Virgil the " landscape-lover " and lord of language, expressed in his memorial lines, we are left with an insatiable thirst for other vintages. For there, if we have learnt to be possessed by the golden theme—

" Ilium falling, Rome arising,  
Wars, and filial faith, and Dido's pyre ;"

we are not less held by the spirit and individuality of the poet. Once having formed our first oncoming attachment to Virgil, we, his English readers, must wish to know him too in his

*Eclogues* and his *Georgics*, and in those reflections of his life and habit to be found in pages more intimate than an epic in its large poetry can allow.

No doubt there is a temptation in all his poems to look for more than Virgil ever meant to give. But it is part of the delightful interest of the *Eclogues*, that we seem there to be continually surprising the young craftsman, either in his 'prentice work, studying his craft and unblushingly imitating his forerunners, or casting furtive shadows of himself and his history on the idyllic grass where Tityrus and Corydon are the ideal counterfeits. Professor Nettleship, in an essay accompanying his reprint of the *Ancient Lives of Virgil* (published by the Clarendon Press in 1879), worked out comparatively after a most interesting fashion some of the cross-evidences that bear on the poet's life afforded by Suetonius and others.

Virgil's debt to Theocritus, and then to Catullus; his succession in the line of the Roman poets, of which he was the prince and chief; his attachment to the cause of Julius Cæsar, which unlike that of Horace was steadfast and sincere; all these emerge more clearly in this survey of the old biographers. It drives us to the fifth *Eclogue*, with a sense of the

imminent presence of Julius Cæsar himself; and to the ninth, to find the idyllic echo of Virgil's ejection when Mantua was sacrificed to the military despotism.

*Lycidas.* Pray, Mæris, whither wendest? To the town?

*Mæris.* O Lycidas, this have we lived to see,  
Unfeared before: strange holders of our farm  
Say "This is mine: begone, ye farmers old!"  
Now crushed beneath the unresting wheel of Chance,  
To such we sorrowing bear these kids and pray  
A murrain with them.

*Lycidas.* I had heard, methought,  
From where the climbing mountains first begin  
To fall in gentle slopes adown the vale,  
Even to the water and the ancient grove  
Of windworn beeches, all the country side  
Was saved from harm by your Menalcas' songs.

*Mæris.* Yea, thou hadst heard: 'twas thus that rumour  
ran.

But Lycidas, amid this clash of arms  
Our songs avail no more than, as men say,  
Doves of Dodona when the eagle stoops.  
Had not from hollow holm-oak on my left  
A raven warned me to leave argument  
Unsaid and yield, neither thy Mæris here  
Nor great Menalcas had been living now.

*Lycidas.* Ah! can such evil fall on any man?  
Ah me! so nearly had we lost thy charms.  
So nearly thee, Menalcas!

The nobility and heightened style of the fifth *Eclogue* would, it is pointed out, perfectly suit so great a subject as Julius Cæsar. There



are certain minor details in Virgil which are corroborative too. In Suetonius' *Life of Julius Cæsar* there are two fancies mentioned which appear in the same *Eclogue*. "One is that on the night before his death Cæsar dreamed he was soaring above the clouds and touching the right hand of Jupiter himself. The reader is irresistibly reminded of Virgil's 'candidus insuetum miratur limen Olympi sub pedibusque videt nubes et sidera Daphnis:' in the sheen of his divinity he looks for the first time on the threshold of heaven and sees the clouds and stars beneath his feet:—

Where the deep transported mind may soar  
Above the wheeling poles, and at Heaven's door  
Look in and see each blissful deity  
How he before the thunderous throne doth lie.

The other refers to the tradition that a number of horses which Cæsar had consecrated and set free in the neighbourhood of the Rubicon, for some days before his murder shed floods of tears and refused to touch any food.

By connecting him in time, through history and tradition, with Julius Cæsar, we place Virgil as readily as we place Milton in Cromwell's dynasty. In the literary order, if we place him first by his discipleship to a Greek poet, Theocritus, we turn then to Catullus.

Speaking of his debt to Catullus, Professor Nettleship says:—"Nothing is more natural than that the susceptible young poet should have been deeply influenced by the style of his illustrious elder contemporary. But partly the growth of Virgil's own mind, partly the study of philosophy, partly his respect for Lucretius, for Helvius Cinna the learned and admired of Catullus, for Varius the epic and Asinius Pollo the tragic poet, may have given a more serious turn to his aspirations."

However, it is well we should remember that just as the Latin poet had his pedigree, Virgil is here an adopted English poet, and that his many translators have made for him an English pedigree too. In his introduction to the *Æneid* volume in this series, Mr. J. P. Maine has given an interesting account of the poets, early and late, who have translated that poem. But the comparative English triumph of Virgil in his epic form has never been equalled by any correspondent success in the pastorals and the *Georgics*.

Dryden's is still the proverbial English name that we attach to Virgil's, and when we take up a new translation, it is by his standard that we must half-consciously try it. But Dryden, writing with whatever mastery of verse, was

too robust to be a sure interpreter of a poet of another tongue in his more intimate art ; one requiring that the translator should be at least as patient as his original, as sensitive to the light and shade of words, as anxious about the curious felicity of his language. There were other translators of Dryden's time and after him, worse than he ; before him came the adventurous John Ogilby, who published the first complete Virgil in English. That was in 1649, the year of Charles the First's death, and Ogilby in 1654 published what he called his second Virgil. Ogilby was often dull and tedious, and he missed the finer sense of some passages, and the whole charm and music of others ; but occasionally in his *Bucolicks*, where he is more unequal than in the *Æneid*, he has his memorable lines. A passage from the end of the second ' *Eclog*,' as he phonetically spells it, will give a certain taste of his quality—good in phrase, weak in movement :

“ Behold, they now unyoke the weary steer,  
And the sun setting, larger shades appear :  
Still Love burns me : Is there no mean in Love ?  
Ah Coridon ! what madness doth thee move ?  
On the green Elm hangs my half-pruned Vine.  
But rather now some needfull task designe,  
Prepare soft twigs, the limber Bul-rush winde,  
And if Alexis scorn, some other finde.”

Compare this with Dryden's, and then with the present version ; and you have some idea of the prime difficulty and the hard-won increase in art of Virgil's translators.

The interesting point to be noted in Ogilby is that he was learning his translator's craft as he went along. His *Æneid* is better than his *Eclogs* ; in the *Georgics* he is best of all. There sometimes he rewards the flagging reader with a faint Shakespearian echo resounding in the Virgilian line, before he falls back into the usual Ogilbean mode :

“There is a flower which grows in meadow ground,  
Swains call Amello, easie to be found.”

This couplet is from the fourth book of the *Georgics*. The following five lines from the end of the same book are still more notable :

“His head then from his Ivory shoulders torn,  
Was down the channel of swift Hebrus borne,  
And whilst his dying tongue could move at all  
Eurydice, Eurydice, did call,  
And all the banks resound Eurydice.”

Dryden, who was associated with Ogilby at a later period, and who like Pope turned him into a by-word, was not above borrowing from him on occasion. There is no comparison in art between the two ; and there is no room here to

trace the line of those who after Dryden tried to put Virgil, "the most translated and the most untranslatable of poets," into English.

One is almost tempted to steal from Dryden, as it is, his Dedication to the *Eclogues*, in which there is more than a taste of his admirable prose quality. And beside it, Addison's essay on the *Georgics*, usually included in the editions of Dryden's, might be placed. But these critical services to Virgil are well known, and perhaps another, more modern but less familiar, written in verse, may still more effectively close the English tribute to his genius, and this we find in the sonnet upon the *Georgics* by Mr. J. B. B. Nichols :

"On Tuscan farms revolve each changeless year  
The world-old toils of the world in order meet :  
Labour is good and rest from labour sweet,  
Kind leafage and mossed cave and living mere :  
Through silver olive-orchards ploughs the steer,  
And shepherds sing in shaded summer heat ;  
But who has eyes to track the wood-god's feet,  
The wine-god's world-song who has ears to hear ?

Virgil, our brain-sick life tossed to and fro,  
Nature or Art too tired, too blind, to know,  
Feels yet their secret in thy magic scrol  
That high-rapt calm so far remote from us  
Yet not too steadfastly felicitous  
Nor too divinely alien to console."

The *Editio Princeps* of Virgil is that printed at Rome by Sweynham and Pannartz. It was not dated, but it is almost certain that it was printed before the Venice folio edition of V. de Spira, which was issued in 1470. The best modern critical editions of the text are those of Ribbeck (4 vols. 1895) and F. A. Hirtzel (*Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis*, 1900). Of the editions containing explanatory notes, that of Conington and Nettleship, revised by Haverfield, is the standard English commentary. That of A. Sidgwick (2 vols. Cambridge) is more elementary, but will be found valuable. Those of Kennedy (London, 1879) and of Papillon and Haigh (Oxford, 2 vols. 1890-91) may also be referred to.

The best modern prose translations are those of J. W. Mackail (London, 1885) and Conington (London, 1870).

*Eclogues.* English Translations, Verse :

F. Wrangham, 1815 ; C. S. Calverley, 1836 ; R. M. Millington, 1870 ; Samuel Palmer, 1883 ; E. J. L. Scott, 1884 ; Rt. Hon. Sir G. O. Morgan, 1897 ; John Sargeaunt (Broadway Booklets), 1903.

*Georgics.* English Translations, Verse :

W. Mills, 1780 ; Sotheby, 1800, 1815 ; W. Stawell and others, 1808 ; J. M. King, 1843, 1871 (different translation ; (with Heyne text) literally and rhythmically translated, W. Sewell, 1846, 1854 ; W. H. Bathurst, 1849 ; E. Cobbold, 1852 ; J. B. Rose, 1865 ; R. D. Blackmore, 1871 ; Kennedy, 1876 ; J. Rhoades, 1881 ; H. W. Preston, 1881 ; Lord Burghclere, 1904.

Prose : I. Butt, 1834.

Beside these separate versions of the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, others appeared in the collective editions of Ogilby, 1649-54 ; Dryden, 1697, etc.

Students of Virgil would also do well to consult Sellar, *Poets of the Augustan Age* (Oxford, 1883), and Nettleship *Introduction to the Study of Virgil*.

THE ECLOGUES AND  
GEORGICS OF VIRGIL  
TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE

BY T. F. ROYDS, M.A.

LATE ASSISTANT-MASTER AT WELLINGTON COLLEGE  
AND SCHOLAR OF WORCESTER COLLEGE, OXFORD





AMICO OLIM MAGISTRO SUO  
L. E. UPCOTT, A.M.  
ET SCHOLARIBUS MARLBURIENSIBUS  
PRÆTERITIS PRÆSENTIBUS FUTURIS  
OPUSCULUM HOC  
DEDICAT  
T. F. R.  
MARLBURIENSIS

Let the classic page thy fancy lead  
Through rural scenes : such as the Mantuan swain  
Paints in the matchless harmony of song.

THOMSON.

## PREFACE

IT seems a pity that one of the world's greatest poets should be unknown to many who could pass a fair examination in Shakspeare. All poetry loses heavily by translation, but it is better to know a great poet through a barbarian language than not to know him at all.

Of the extant translations of the Eclogues and Georgics none is written by a master excepting the antiquated version of Dryden. Dissatisfaction with the work of his predecessors, combined with a period of leisure, induced this translator to try his hand. The only translation of these poems that he has read with pleasure is the rhymed version of the Georgics by the author of *Lorna Doone*. Of its kind surely this is unmatchable, but the distance of Blackmore from Virgil is great, and where dignity is required all rhymed versions seem to fail utterly to echo the long roll of "the stateliest measure ever moulded by the lips of man."

The present version aims at combining accuracy with beauty of form. Literalness has not

been sought. Whether it justifies its existence is a question that must be left to the already weary critic.

The translator desires to express his obligation to the Rev. E. D. Stone and to Mr. L. E. Upcott for numerous improvements throughout the work.

T. F. R.

THE ECLOGUES, BUCOLICS,  
OR PASTORALS OF VIRGIL



# THE ECLOGUES OF VIRGIL

## ECLOGUE I

MELIBŒUS. TITYRUS.

*M.* THOU, Tityrus, 'neath the leafy beeches  
lying,  
Drawest wild wood-notes from thine oaten straw.  
We to the sweet farm say a long farewell,  
To home and country : thou in shady ease  
Teachest the woods " fair Amaryll " their song.

*T.* O Melibœus, 'twas a very god  
That granted me this peace, for he a god  
Will ever be to me ; from my own folds  
A tender lamb his altar oft shall stain.  
'Twas he allowed my kine to stray afield— 10  
See, there they go !—and me to work my will  
Upon a rustic pipe.

*M.* I envy not,  
Nay, I admire : such foul disorder reigns  
O'er all the countryside. Lo ! sick at heart  
I lead the little she-goats on, scarce dragging  
This one ; for lately in the hazel-copse  
She travailed hard : on the bare flint, alas !

Twin-kids, the hope of all the flock, she bare.  
 Often, I know, but for my crooked mind,  
 The heaven-struck oak had warned me of this  
                   woe. 20

But nathless tell me, Tityrus, who he is,  
 This god of thine.

*T.*                               The city men call Rome  
 I in my simpleness thought like to ours,  
 Whither we shepherds often use to drive  
 Our tender weanling lambs. For so I knew  
 The pup to match his sire, the kid her dam,  
 So loved I to compare small things with great.  
 But verily this city o'er the rest  
 Hath so upraised her head, as cypresses  
 O'er limber withies hold preëminence. 30

*M.* And wherefore this great longing to see  
       Rome?

*T.* For Freedom, blessed Freedom, which,  
       though late,  
 Looked on my slothfulness, when now my beard  
 Fell hoarier to the steel; yea, looked on me  
 And came belated, now that Amaryll  
 Had called me hers, and Galaté was gone.  
 For, I will own it, while I was a slave  
 To Galaté, nor hope of liberty  
 Nor thrift of wage was mine. Though from my  
       pens  
 Full many a victim met the knife, and though 40



I pressed rich cheeses for the ungrateful town,  
No heavy price e'er filled my homeward hand.

*M.* I wondered why fair Amaryll was crying  
So sadly to the gods; I wondered why  
She left ripe apples on their tree: 'twas this—  
Her Tityrus was gone. The very pines,  
The watersprings and these thine orchard trees  
Were calling "Tityrus!"

*T.* What could I do?  
Nor otherwise could I cast off my bonds,  
Nor elsewhere find heaven so strong to save. 50  
There, Melibœus, did I see that youth  
For whom twelve days each year mine altars  
smoke.

There gave he speedy answer to my prayer:  
"Feed still, my boys, your kine, still rear your  
bulls."

*M.* Happy old man! Thy farm is still thine  
own,  
And shall be aye, and great enough for thee.  
Though barren stone and muddy bogrush spread  
O'er wasted pastures, yet no fodder strange  
Shall tempt thy lambing ewes, nor neighbour's  
flock  
Infect them with disease. O happy old man! 60  
Here 'mid loved streams and god-frequented  
founts  
Thou'lt court the cooling shade. Here, as of old,

The willow boundary-fence, that paradise  
 Of Hybla's honey-bee, shall whisper dreams  
 O'er drowsy heads ; here 'neath a beetling rock  
 The leaf-dresser shall waft his song to heaven.  
 The while thou'lt hear thy deep-voiced wood-  
 doves coo

And turtles purring in the topmost elm.

*T.* Therefore shall stags browse buoyant in  
 the sky,

And seas leave all their fish stark on the  
 strand, 70

Therefore shall nations stray o'er alien soil,  
 And Arar slake the exile Parthian's thirst,  
 And Germans quaff the Tigris : sooner this  
 Than from my memory shall those features fade.

*M.* But we depart, to thirsty Africa

Or Scythian wolds, or rushing Cretan streams,  
 Or Britons wholly sundered from the world.

Ah ! shall I ever long years hence behold  
 My own dear home—a wretched bothy then  
 With turf-piled roof—and marvel as I gaze 80  
 At a few ears of corn, my realm of old ?

Shall brutal soldiery possess my tilth  
 So newly ploughed ? shall aliens hold these  
 crops ?

See to what depths of misery we are come  
 Through civil strife ! For these my harvests  
 stand !

Now, Melibœus, graft thy sapling pears,  
And set thy vines arow. Go hence, my goats,  
Go, little flock once happy. Nevermore  
In grotto green reclining shall I watch  
You dangle from a bosky crag afar. 90  
No carols shall I sing, and nevermore  
With this my crook to lead you shall ye browse  
The bitter willow and sweet lucerne-bloom.

*T.* Yet this one night thou mightest rest with  
me  
On fresh-plucked leaves. Ripe apples shalt thou  
have,  
And mealy chestnuts, and no lack of cheese.  
E'en now the distant farms send up their smoke,  
And shadows lengthen from the lofty hills.

## ECLOGUE II

THE shepherd Corydon all vainly burned  
With passion for the favourite of his lord,  
Beauteous Alexis. Nought his love availed,  
Save that beneath the dark-tressed beechwood  
deep

To the lone wilderness his careful tongue  
Trilled forth this unpremeditated strain :

Cruel Alexis, carest thou no whit  
For all my lays, nor pitiest at all?  
Thou'lt be my death at last! Now kine and  
sheep

Seek shade and coolness, now the lizard  
lurks 10

In thorny brakes, and Thestylis compounds  
For reapers weary with the scorching heat  
A savoury mess of garlic and wild thyme.

But as I track thee 'neath the blazing sun—  
A grating cricket-choir in every bush

Makes symphony with me. Rather would I  
Bear with the sullen ire and high disdain  
Of Amaryllis, rather would I choose

Menalcas, though he wears a swarthy skin.  
O fair white youth, confide not overmuch 20  
In colour. For the privet-blossoms fall,

But gathered are the dusky hyacinths.  
Thou spurnest me, nor askest what I am,  
How great my flocks, how deep my foaming  
pails,  
Which neither summer's heat nor winter's frost  
E'er lightened yet. A thousand lambs of mine  
Roam the Sicilian hills. I know the songs  
Wherewith Amphion called his cattle home  
On Acte's Aracynthus. Nor am I  
Ill-favoured, for I saw myself yestreen 30  
In the sea's marge, when all the waves were laid  
By sleeping winds. Can the glassed image lie?  
Judge thou and see if Daphnis be more fair.  
O deign to haunt rough field and lowly cot  
With me, to shoot the stag, and with green wand  
To gather flocks of kids! Then thou and I  
Will mimic Pan with woodland melodies.  
Pan taught to join with wax a row of reeds,  
The shepherd and the sheep are dear to Pan.  
Nor, prithee, loathe to chafe thy gentle lip 40  
Along the reeds. To understand this art  
What pains Amyntas took! I have a pipe  
Of seven unequal hemlock-stems compacted.  
Damœtas gave it me, and dying said:  
"Now serve thy second master." Thus he said,  
And fool Amyntas burned with jealousy.  
Two fawns have I beside; I found them laid  
Deep in a perilous glen; whose hides are flecked

E'en yet with white, and twice a day they drain  
 A ewe's full udder. Lo! they wait for thee. 50  
 Thestylis long has asked them for her own,  
 Yea, and shall take them, since thou countest  
 cheap

My choicest gifts. Come to me, beauteous boy!  
 See, the Nymphs bring thee basketfuls of lilies,  
 See, the bright Naiad plucks wan violets  
 And poppy-heads, to blend with daffodil  
 And scented fennel-flower: then weaving in  
 Cassia and many a fragrant herb, she sets  
 Dusk hyacinths in yellow marigold.

Myself will gather quinces silvered o'er 60  
 With downy fleece, chestnuts, my Amaryll's joy,  
 And waxen plums: to plums be honour too;  
 Bays will I add, with you, ye sister myrtles:  
 So shall ye mingle your delicious breath.

Corydon, thou'rt a boor! Alexis cares  
 Nought for thy gifts, and if with gifts thou strive  
 Iollas would out-gift thee. Out! alack!  
 What has my folly wrought? I have let loose  
 The southern gale upon my flowers, wild boars  
 Into my running rills. Whom dost thou fear, 70  
 Infatuate boy? For woods have been the haunt  
 Of Trojan Paris and the holy gods.  
 Let Pallas dwell within the wallèd towns  
 Herself hath planted, but the woods 'fore all  
 Shall be my joy. The grisly lioness

Follows the wolf, the wolf in turn the goat,  
The playful goat follows the lucerne-bloom,  
And Corydon thee, Alexis: each is drawn  
By his peculiar joy. See, now the steers  
Drag home the ploughshares hanging from the  
yoke, So

And shadows deepen with departing day.  
But me Love burns: how should Love cease to  
burn?

Ah Corydon, Corydon, what frenzy now  
Hath seized thee? To thy leaf-dark elm-tree  
clings

Thy half-pruned vine. Why dost not rather  
strive

At least to finish out some common task,  
Plaiting soft rush and withy? Another love,  
If this disdaineth thee, will soon be thine.

## ECLOGUE III

MENALCAS. DAMÆTAS. PALÆMON.

*M.* WHO owns this flock, Damætas? answer  
me.

Melibœus?

*D.* Nay, 'tis Ægon's: lately he  
Entrusted it to me.

*M.* Poor wretched sheep!  
While he courts his Neära; full of fear  
Lest she prefer me to himself, the sheep  
Are by this hireling knave milked twice an hour,  
And ewes are drained and milk stolen from the  
lambs.

*D.* Mind thou what taunts thou castest at a  
man.

We know whom thou—and in what shrine it  
was—

When he-goats leered and Nymphs laughed  
naughtily. 10

*M.* Doubtless 'twas then what time they saw  
me hack

Micon's young vineyard with my dastard knife.

*D.* Or by these olden beeches when thou  
brakest



The bow and reeds of Daphnis: moved with  
 grief,  
 Spiteful Menalcas, when thou sawest them  
 Given to the lad; yea, and hadst grieved to  
 death,  
 But for this vengeance.

*M.* What can masters do  
 When villains make so bold? Saw I not thee,  
 Thou scoundrel, stalk and capture Damon's  
 goat,  
 Though loud Lycisca barked? And when I  
 cried: 20  
 "Ho! gone away! Tityrus, call the flock!"  
 Thou didst lie hidden in the sedges near.

*D.* Should he not pay me, since my music  
 won.  
 The goat my pipe had earned? For—knowst  
 thou this?  
 The goat was mine: Damon confessed the  
 same  
 Himself, and yet denied his power to pay.

*M.* Thou conquer him in song? Didst ever  
 own  
 A Pan-pipe waxen-joined? Wast thou not  
 wont,  
 Thou dunce, at cross-roads with thy scannel  
 straw  
 To mince and maul a miserable song? 30

*D.* Well, shall we try in turn what each can do?

I stake this cow : twice daily milketh she,  
Feedeth twin calves ; what better canst desire ?  
Now do thou name thy pledge.

*M.* I would not dare

To wager thee one lambkin from the flock :  
A cruel stepmother have I at home,  
A father too ; and twice a day the twain  
Number the flock, and one of them the kids.  
But what will in thine eyes be better far,  
Since folly pleases thee, two beechwood cups 40  
Carved by th' inspired Alcimedon I'll stake.  
A limber vine graved by his cunning tool  
Winds o'er them, tangled with the wandering  
fruit

Of ivy pale. Two figures central stand :  
Conon, and who was he whose pencil drew  
The whole round of the sun, and shewed the  
world

What time to reap, and when to lean on plough ?  
Ne'er have I lipped them yet, but keep them  
stored.

*D.* That same Alcimedon carved me two cups,  
And wreathed lithe bear's-breech round the  
handles twain, 50  
And Orpheus with the charmèd woods behind  
Set midmost. Never have I lipped them yet,

But keep them stored. If yon cow holds thine  
eyes,

What vaunt is this of cups?

*M.* Thou'lt not to-day  
Escape me; wheresoe'er thy challenge lead,  
There will I come; only let one be judge,  
Even—lo! Palæmon, who approacheth now.  
I'll make thy challenges for ever cease.

*D.* Say on, if aught thou canst: I'll not be  
slow,  
I fear no judge,—but lay it well to heart, 60  
Neighbour Palæmon, 'tis no trivial game.

*P.* Sing both, for on the soft grass we are  
set,  
And field and tree are with new verdure clad,  
And woods are leafy, and the golden year  
Is fairest now. Damœtas, lead the song,  
Then follow thou, Menalcas. Sing in turn:  
Respond and antiphon the Muses love.

*D.* Jove's the beginning of song: all earth is  
full of his glory,  
Valleys are blessed by him, yea, and he loveth  
my lays.

*M.* I am beloved by Phœbus: he knoweth I  
render his bounties 70  
Ever to him, hyacinths blushing so sweetly and  
bays.

*D.* My Galatea's a frolicsome lass : she pelts  
me with apples,  
Then in the withy-bed hides, carefully shewing  
the place.

*M.* My flame cometh unbidden to me, my  
belovèd Amyntas ;  
Soothly my dogs know his better than Delia's  
face.

*D.* Gifts have I won for mine, for of late I  
remembered an elm-tree  
Whither a wood-dove's mate built her aërial  
nest.

*M.* What I was able, I did : sent mine ten  
beautiful apples  
Plucked from a wild wood tree ; ten other wait  
his behest.

*D.* O how many and sweet are the sayings of  
my Galatea ! So  
Up to the ears of the gods help them, ye  
breezes, to soar.

*M.* That thou despisest me not in thy heart  
what boots it, Amyntas,  
If I watch at the nets while thou art hunting the  
boar ?

*D.* Send me thy Phyllis, I pray, for 'tis my  
birthday, Iollas ;  
Follow thyself when I slay heifers to prosper  
my wheat.

*M.* Phyllis I love before others, her dear eyes  
mourned my departing :

“Farewell, sweet one, a long farewell,” I heard  
her repeat.

*D.* Wolves are a pest to the folds, rains  
trample the ripening harvest,  
Winds to the trees bring woe, Amaryll’s anger  
to me.

*M.* Moisture is sweet to the seeds, to the  
weaned kids strawberry bushes, 90  
Willow to pregnant ewes, I, O Amyntas, to thee.

*D.* Pollio loves my muse, although she was  
nursed in the country :  
Fatten a calf for a new votary, Pierides.

*M.* Nay, but a well-grown bull—for Pollio too  
is a poet—  
Bold with his horn, with his hoof scattering dust  
to the breeze.

*D.* Pollio, who loves thee, let him fly to thy  
paradise with thee ;  
Bear for him balm, ye thorns : rivers, with honey  
o’erflow.

*M.* Mævius, he may adore thy songs whom  
Bavius pleases ;  
He-goats, give him your milk : foxes, be yoked  
to his plough.

*D.* Ye boys gathering flowers and the ground-  
loving strawberry culling, 100

Run away quick, chilly snakes skulk where the  
grasses are high.

*M.* Warily walk, ye sheep, for the bank gives  
treacherous holding ;

See ! the big ram his wool seeks in the meadow  
to dry.

*D.* Tityrus, frighten the grazing goats far  
away from the river :

They shall be washed in the spring all, when  
the season is meet.

*M.* Ho ! lads, fetch up the sheep : if the milk  
be stolen by the noonday.

(Lately it was, ye know), vainly we tug at the teat.

*D.* Ah ! how lean is my bull in the midst of  
the fattening vetches !

Love o'er master and herd, Love ever ringeth a  
knell.

*M.* Love is no tempter of these, whose bones  
scarce hold them together. 110

Over my tender lambs some eye is casting a spell.

*D.* Tell me, O tell me, the land—and I'll  
make thee my Phœbus Apollo—

Where three yards and a half measure the arch  
of the sky.

*M.* Tell me, O tell me, the land where flowers  
grow, bearing engraven

Names of kings, and at last thou shalt have  
Phyllis for aye.

*P.* 'Tis not for us to judge so great a strife  
Betwixt you. Thou hast earned the cow, and  
thou,  
And whoso shrinks from Love's sweet treachery  
And proves his bitterness. But come, my lads,  
Close now the sluice: the meads have drunk  
their fill. 120

## ECLOGUE IV

This famous poem was written in B.C. 40. It is still an open question who the divine child is, and whether Virgil owed anything to Isaiah. (Cf. Is. vii. 14, 15; ix. 7; xi. 6-8; xxxv. 1.) Recent studies of Virgil's Messianic idea will be found in the *Hibbert Journal* for January and the *Expositor* for April, June and August of this year (1907).

MUSES of Sicily, lift a nobler strain!  
Some love not shrubs and lowly tamarisks.  
If woods we sing, let woods beseem a prince.  
The last age told by Cumæ's seer<sup>1</sup> is come,  
A mighty roll of generations new  
Is now arising. Justice<sup>2</sup> now returns  
And Saturn's realm, and from high heaven  
descends  
A worthier race of men. Only do thou  
Smile, chaste Lucina, on the infant boy,  
With whom the iron age will pass away. 10  
The golden age in all the earth be born;  
For thine Apollo reigns. Under thy rule,  
Thine, Pollio, shall this glorious era spring,  
And the great progress of the months begin.

<sup>1</sup> The Sibyl.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Geo.* II. 565.



Under thy rule all footprints of our guilt  
Shall perish, and the peaceful earth be freed  
From everlasting fear. Thou, child, shalt know  
The life of gods, and see commingled choirs  
Of gods and heroes, and be seen of them,  
And rule a world by righteous father tamed. 20

Then Earth shall haste to bring thee birthday  
gifts,

Uncultured Earth: the ivy's gadding curls  
And fox-glove and the water-lily twined  
With laughing bear's-breech. Uncompelled  
thy goats

Shall bring their udders heavy-laden home,  
And monstrous lions scare thy herds no more.  
Thy very cot shall bloom with winsome flowers,  
Serpents shall cease, the treacherous poison-  
plant

Shall fail, Assyrian balm shall fill the land.

But when thou'lt read the praise of famous  
men 30

And thy sire's deeds, and know true excellence,  
The plain shall softly teem with yellowing corn,  
And grapes shall blush upon the unkempt briar,  
And honeydew shall weep from seasoned oaks.

Nathless some taint of old iniquity  
Shall stay, to bid men tempt with ships the sea  
And build them city-walls and furrow earth  
With ploughshares. A new Tiphys shall arise,

A second Argo fraught with chosen knights,  
 And other wars shall rage, and once again 40  
 Shall valorous Achilles fare to Troy.

And when strong time hath wrought thee to a  
 man,

The seafarer shall roam the wave no more,  
 Nor ships make merchandise : for all the earth  
 Shall be all-fruitful. Neither shall the vine  
 Suffer the pruning-hook, nor fields the hoe.  
 And lusty husbandmen from ox's neck  
 Shall loose the yoke ; and wool with divers hues  
 Need not to cheat, for lo ! the living ram  
 Shall softly blush with purple fleece, or glow 50  
 With saffron yellow ; grazing lambs shall wear  
 Vestments of scarlet in the bounteous meads.  
 "So run, fair ages," to their spindles sang  
 The Fates that weave the stedfast web of God.

Take thy great heritage, thine hour is come,  
 Blest offspring of the gods, great seed of Jove.  
 See how Creation bows her massy dome,  
 Oceans and continents and aëry deeps :  
 All nature gladdens at the coming age.  
 O may a long life's evening then be mine, 60  
 And breath to tell thy deeds ! Not Linus then  
 Nor Thracian Orpheus shall surpass my song,  
 E'en though the beautiful Apollo help  
 Linus, his son, and Orpheus call to aid  
 Calliopé that bare him. Nay, though Pan

Before Arcadian judges with me strive,  
Before Arcadia would he yield the palm.

Learn, babe, to laugh when mother calls thee  
now,

Thy mother weary with her ten long months.

Learn, baby, now: who has not known the  
smile

70

Of parents' eyes, he is not meet to share  
Tables of gods or beds of goddesses.

## ECLOGUE V

MENALCAS. MOPSUS.

*Me.* O MOPSUS, since we're met here, good  
men both,

Thou skilled to tune the slender reeds, and I  
To utter verses, prithee, sit we down  
Amid these elms and hazel underwoods,

*Mo.* Thou art the elder ; I must yield to thee,  
Whether where west winds fan the flickering  
shade

Or 'neath the cave we go. Mark how the cave  
Is fretted with the wild-vine's clusters rare.

*Me.* Only Amyntas hopes to rival thee  
On our hills.

*Mo.* Yea, and haply would essay 10  
To outsing Phœbus ?

*Me.* Mopsus, lead the song,  
If aught of love for Phyllis thou canst tell,  
Or praise for Alcon, or for Codrus hate,  
Sing on—let Tityrus tend the browsing kids.

*Mo.* Well, I will try what songs I wrote  
yestreen  
On a green beechwood bole, and marked the  
tune

Betwixt the lines. Then bid Amyntas sing.

*Me.* As yield lithe willows to the olive pale,  
Or to the crimson rose-bed lowly nard,  
So doth Amyntas yield, I ween, to thee. 20

*Mo.* But cease thy talking: we have raught  
the cave.

“The Nymphs for Daphnis by a hard fate  
slain

Wept, and ye woods and rivers shared their pain.  
His mother praying clasped his wretched corse  
And strove to move the cold stars to remorse.  
No neatherd, Daphnis, for that death of thine  
Drove to the cooling stream his pastured kine.  
No beast to taste the water-spring had heart,  
And from sweet meadow-grasses stood apart,  
Daphnis, I learned from woods and mountains  
lone 30

How Libyan lions for thy death made moan.  
Tigers were yoked to cars at thy command,  
And pageants of the Bacchic dancers planned,  
And soft leaves woven round the supple wand,  
The vine her tree, the grapes their vine adorn,  
Herds worship bulls, and fields are crowned  
with corn;

So dost thou grace all thine. Of thee bereft  
By Pales and by Phœbus fields were left.  
In furrows where we sowed big barley-seeds

Now spring wild oats and worthless danel-weeds. 40

For bright narcissus and soft violet-flowers  
The thistle and the sharp Christ-thorn are ours.  
Sprinkle the ground with leaves, o'ershade the  
rills

With trees, ye shepherds, for so Daphnis wills.  
And build a tomb and carve thereon this  
rhyme :

'Here, famed from greenwood to the stars  
sublime,

Lies Daphnis, tender of a flock most fair,  
Himself the shepherd e'en more debonair.' "

*Me.* Singer divine, such is thy song to me  
As sleep on grassy lawns to weary heads, 50  
Or grateful draughts from leaping water-springs  
In summer's heat. Nor on the reeds alone,  
But in the song thou equallest thy lord.  
O happy youth, thou'lt soon be famed as he.  
Yet I in turn will sing thee this of mine  
As best I can ; thy Daphnis will I praise  
To starland, yea, to starland will I praise  
Daphnis, for this thy Daphnis loved me too.

*Mo.* Thou couldst ne'er grant to me a greater  
boon.

The youth was worthy of it, and long since 60  
Stimichon praised to me that song of thine.

*Me.* "Now glistening Daphnis marvels at  
-Heaven's door,

And clouds and stars beneath the awful floor.

Then buxom Pleasure rules the woods and  
glades,

Pan and the shepherds and the Dryad maids.

Net against deer, wolf against sheepfold cease

To plot deceit. good Daphnis loveth peace.

The unkempt mountains pass the glad voice  
round,

'He is a god' the reboant rocks resound,

'He is a god indeed' echoes the bushy  
ground. 70

Be favourable and gracious to thine own!

Behold four altars: two for thee alone,

Daphnis, and two for Phœbus. On his twain

Yearly shall great burnt-offerings be slain;

Two foaming milk-pails shall crown each of  
thine,

And two bowls of the olive's unctuous wine.

Joy for the banquet shall the grape afford

With Chian wine from sparkling flagons poured.

Before hearth-fires shall winter's feast be laid,

At harvest-season underneath the shade. 80

Damœtas and Ægon shall enchant the meal,

Alphesibœus dance a satyr-reel.

This shall be thine whene'er to Nymphs we yield

Our yearly vows, or sanctify the field.

Long as rivers hold fish and boars love hills,  
 Long as the bee his bag with thyme fulfills  
 And crickets drink the dew, so long thy name  
 Shall live all-glorious on the lips of Fame.  
 Henceforth the swains shall pay thee every year  
 The vows that Ceres and that Bacchus hear. 90  
 Grant thou their prayers, and they the broken  
 vow shall fear."

*Mo.* Ah! what reward is worth so good a  
 song?

For not the South wind whispering through the  
 reeds,  
 Nor league-long rollers thundering on the strand,  
 Nor tumbling streams in rocky watercourses  
 Adown a valley, ever charmed me so.

*Me.* Yet first accept thou this frail hemlock-  
 stem,

It taught me "Corydon for Alexis burned."  
 Aye, taught me "Who, Damœtas, owns this  
 flock?"

*Mo.* Then do thou take this crook: Anti-  
 genes 100

Oft asked and ne'er received it, though e'en then  
 He was a loveable youth: 'tis shod with brass  
 And knotted evenly—a perfect crook.



## ECLOGUE VI

THE rhymes of Sicily were the first toy  
Of my Thalia,<sup>1</sup> and the humble woods  
Her early habitation. When I sang  
Of kings and battles, Phœbus plucked my ear  
And warning said: "A shepherd, Tityrus,  
Should feed fat sheep and sing a fine-drawn  
song."

Thou'lt soon see many who will long to tell  
Thy praises, Varus, and recount sad wars,  
So I upon a slender reed will court  
The rustic Muse. At thy command I sing. 10  
And if one raptured reader shall be found,  
Varus, our tamarisks and all the grove  
Shall hymn thy glory; Phœbus loves no scroll  
Better than that prescribed with thy name.

Begin, ye Muses.

Once upon a time  
Two yokels, Chromis and Mnasyllus, saw  
Silenus lying in a cave asleep.  
His veins were puffed with wine of yesterday,  
As ever; near his head the slipped wreath lay,  
And from worn handle trailed his massy jar. 20

<sup>1</sup> The Muse of pastoral poetry.

Him they assail, for oft the ancient rogue  
 Had falsely promised them a song, and bind  
 Fetters upon him wov'n of his own wreaths.  
 Then Ægle comes and cheers their dubious  
 hands,

Ægle, most beautiful of all the Naiads,  
 And stains with crimson mulberry-juice his  
 brows

Wide-wakened now. He, laughing at the trick,  
 Cries: "Wherefore are ye plaiting on these  
 gyves?"

Boys, loose me: 'tis enough to shew your power.  
 I'll sing whate'er ye list; your meed shall be 30  
 Songs, and hers somewhat else." Then straight  
 he sang.

And as he sang, Fauns and wild things were  
 seen

To romp his measures, and staid oaks to nod  
 Their haughty crests: not the Parnassian rock  
 Joys so in Phœbus, not by Rhodope  
 And Ismarus is Orpheus worshipped more.

He sang how through the vasty void concurred  
 The seeds of earth, air, sea and liquid fire;  
 And how from these originals was born  
 The sum of things, and into order rolled 40  
 The amorphous universe itself, and earth  
 Hardened her crust and sundered Nereus off  
 In seas, and slowly terrene forms assumed.

Then the first sunrise greets the wondering earth,  
And clouds rise higher and the rains descend.  
Meantime the forests spring, and fourfoot beasts  
Prowl sparsely o'er the unaccustomed hills.  
And next told he of stones by Pyrrha cast,  
Of Saturn's realm, of vultured Caucasus  
And thief Prometheus ; how the Argonauts 50  
Lost Hylas at the fount, and called him loud  
Till "Hylas! Hylas!" filled the vocal shore.  
Next of Pasiphaë consoled with love  
Of snowy bull, but happier far had bulls  
Been never born. Ah! miserable maid,  
What frenzy seized thee then? The Proetides  
Befooled the fields with bellowings of kine,  
But none of them such loathly wedlock sought  
With beasts, though she had learned to fear the  
plough  
And often searched her smooth brow for the  
horns. 60  
Ah! miserable maiden, o'er the hills  
Thou wanderest now. He with his snowy side  
Cradled in softly-flowering hyacinths  
Beneath dark holm-oak champeth the wan grass,  
Or followeth some favourite in the herd.  
"Close, Nymphs, Dictæan Nymphs, close now  
the glades :  
Haply the wandering footprints of the bull  
Will meet our eyes : haply by pasture green

Allured, or following the herd, some cows  
 Will lead him safely to the Cretan stalls." 70  
 Then hymns he Atalanta marvelling  
 At golden apples; then he tells the tale  
 Of Phaëthon's sisters mossy-kirtled now  
 With bitter bark, and springing from the soil  
 As lofty alder-trees. And then he sings  
 How Gallus by the stream Permessus straying  
 Was guided by a gracious Muse to hills  
 Aonian, how Apollo's choir all stood  
 And did obeisance, how that bard divine,  
 The shepherd Linus, beautifully crowned 80  
 With braided flowers and bitter parsley, cried:  
 "Lo! take these reeds: the Muses give them  
 thee,

The same erst given to Ascrea's Hesiod,  
 Who playing on them lured the mountain-ash  
 Down from her stablished citadel. On these  
 Tell thou the birthday of the Grynean grove,  
 Until no wood delight Apollo more."

What need to speak of Scylla's glistering loins  
 Girdled with barking monsters, how she scathed  
 Ulysses and his fleet, so legend runs, 90  
 And in deep whirlpool with her fell sea-hounds  
 Tore limb from limb his terror-stricken crews.  
 Known is the tale how Tereus changed his form,  
 And known the gruesome gift, the horrid feast,  
 By Philomel prepared; how swiftly she

Fled to the wilderness, how pinion-borne  
She poised disconsolate o'er her ancient home.

What things from Phœbus musing long ago  
Happy Eurotas learned and taught his trees,  
All these our poet sings ; the smitten vales 100  
Echo to Heaven, till now the gloaming star  
Bids fold the flock and duly tell their tale,  
And moves unwelcome up the wistful sky.

## ECLOGUE VII

MELIBŒUS. CORYDON. THYRSIS.

BENEATH a whispering holm-oak chanced to  
sit

Daphnis. Their flocks Thyrsis and Corydon  
Had gathered there : Thyrsis was lord of sheep,  
Corydon of she-goats full-bagged with milk,  
Both in the flower of youth, Arcadians both,  
And skilled to match the amœbæan song.  
Hither, while my young myrtles for the frost  
I clothed, my he-goat, king of all the flock,  
Had strayed away, and so Daphnis I found.  
He in turn spying me cried : " Hither, quick! 10  
O Melibœus ; goats and kids are safe ;  
If thou hast leisure, rest beneath the shade.  
Hither the steers self-guided o'er the leas  
Will come to drink, here Mincio with lush reeds  
Broiders his grassy banks, and sacred oaks  
Hum with innumerable bees." What could I do ?  
I had nor Phyllis nor Alcippe then  
To put my weanling lambs in fold at home,  
And 'twas a mighty war betwixt these twain.  
Nathless their sport before my task I set, 20

And so they both in turn 'gan sing their songs  
 Antiphonal, for thus the inspiring Muse,  
 Daughter of Memory, willed. These Corydon,  
 Those Thyrsis, each in order meet, rehearsed.

*C.* Dear Nymphs of Libethrus, vouchsafe me  
 the boon

Of the sweet tongue ye granted my Codrus  
 of yore :

Like Apollo he sings ; if I match not his tune,  
 This pipe shall hang mute on the pine  
 evermore.

*T.* Ye shepherds, adorn your new poet with  
 bays,

That Codrus's withers with envy be wrung ; 30  
 Or crown me with foxglove, if fulsome his praise,  
 Lest my talent be marred by his poisonous  
 tongue.

*C.* To Diana this boar's head so bristly supplies  
 Little Micon, with antlers of hart many-tined.  
 If my luck shall endure, large as life shall she  
 rise,

Smooth marble ; red buskin her ankle shall  
 bind.

*T.* Priapus, this milk and these cakes once a  
 year

For guarding so poor a demesne are full  
 meed.

We have wrought thee in marble, but golden, I  
swear,

Thou shalt stand if the heavy ewes fruitfully  
breed. 40

*C.* O daughter of Nereus, than sweet thyme  
more sweet,

Snowy-white as the swan, as the pale ivy fair,  
When thou hearest my fed cattle's home-coming  
feet,

O hither, if Corydon still is thy care.

*T.* Nay, call me more bitter than crowfoot, my  
dear,

Rough as broom, as abandoned as weed of  
the sea,

If without thee I count not each day a full year.

Shame, kine, that ye linger so long on the lea!

*C.* O moss-pillowed fountains, grass softer than  
sleep,

Green arbutus netting the shimmerin  
shade, 50

Lo! summer is here: bid him scorch not the  
sheep;

And the soft vine with burgeoning shoots is  
arrayed.

*T.* Here are fires never-failing and pine-faggots  
good

Under soot-blackened rafters we laugh at the  
cold,



As high banks are laughed at by rivers in flood,  
Or as one wolf despises the numberless fold.

*C.* Bearded chestnuts and junipers tower to the  
sky,

And apples lie strewn under every tree.

All Nature is smiling ; but streams will be dry

If beauteous Alexis depart from the lea. 60

*T.* Parched meadows distempered and dying  
are seen,

And the leafy vine-shade is denied to the hills ;  
But at Phyllis's coming the forest is green,

And bountiful rains shall replenish the rills.

*C.* Bacchus joys in the vine, poplar charms  
Hercules,

To fair Venus her myrtle, to Phœbus his bay.

My Phyllis loves hazels : while Phyllis love  
these,

Bay and myrtle to hazel must ever give way.

*T.* Give me pines in the garden and ashes  
afield,

Give me poplar by rivers and fir on the  
braes : 70

But the ash and the pine to thy beauty must  
yield,

If thou comest, O Lycidas, oft to my gaze.

*M.* These I remember. Vainly Thyrsis strove,  
Thenceforth 'twas "Corydon, Corydon" for me.

## ECLOGUE VIII

THE Muse of Damon and Alpheſibœus,  
Two ſwains, to whom forgetful of their graſs,  
Marvelling heifers liſtened as they ſtrove ;  
Whoſe ſong held lynxes ſpell-bound, and con-  
ſtrained

Rivers to pauſe and backward turn their ſtreams,  
The Muſe of Damon and Alpheſibœus.

Thou, Pollio, whether now thou traვეreſt  
The rocks of great Timavus, or the marge  
Of waves Illyrian ſkirteſt,—when will come  
The day when I may tell thy glorious deeds? 10  
O give me leave to publiſh through the world  
Thy ſongs : of Sophoclean buſkin thine  
Alone are worthy. In thy name I ſing,  
In thine I ceaſe. Liſt thou to ſongs begun  
At thy command, and let this ivy-ſpray  
'Mid victory's laurels o'er thy temples climb.

The chill night-ſhadows ſcarce had left the  
ſky,  
What time the dewdrop on the gentle graſs  
Is ſweeteſt to the flock, when Damon thus  
Leaning upon ſmooth olive-ſtaff began— 20

“Riſe, Morning Star, lead on the kindly day,

While o'er unloving Nysa I make moan,  
 Nysa too truly loved. Nothing availed  
 Gods witnessing my troth, yet on the gods  
 In this last agony ere death I call.

*Sing with me, flute, a song of Mænalus.*

Mænalus ever keepeth souging grove  
 And whispering pines, e'er heareth shepherd-  
 loves,

And Pan who first rebuked the silent reeds.

*Sing with me, flute, a song of Mænalus.* . 30

Nysa weds Mopsus now! Where Love is Love  
 All things are possible. Horses will mate  
 With griffins soon, and in our grandsons' time  
 Wild deer come fearlessly with hounds to drink.

*Sing with me, flute, a song of Mænalus.*

Mopsus, behold thy bride! cut torches new,  
 Shower wedding nuts: Hesper brings night for  
 thee.

*Sing with me, flute, a song of Mænalus.*

A worthy husband thine! Scorn, if thou must,  
 All others, loathe my Panpipe and my goats, 40  
 My shaggy eyebrows and my beard unshorn,  
 And doubt if any god heeds mundane things.

*Sing with me, flute, a song of Mænalus.*

Once in our orchards—thou wast tiny then—  
 I watched thee culling apples dewy-fresh—  
 I shewed them—with thy mother. The twelfth  
 year's kiss

Had touched my brow, and standing on tiptoe  
 I just could reach the brittle branches. There  
 I saw and fell : my heart was mine no more !

*Sing with me, flute, a song of Mænalus.* 50

I know what love is now : on Tmaros born  
 Or Rhodope or utmost Garamanth  
 On flinty rocks : no kith nor kin of ours.

*Sing with me, flute, a song of Mænalus.*

Taught by fierce Love, a mother stained her  
 hands

With blood of sons. O cruel cruel mother !

Yea, cruel she, but Love far crueller.

O heartless Love ! O cruel cruel mother !

*Sing with me, flute, a song of Mænalus.*

Now let the scared wolf flee the sheep, hard  
 oaks 60

Bear golden apples, daffodillies bloom

On alders, and the bark of tamarisks

Sweat richest amber, owl put swan to shame

And Tityrus be Orpheus in the woods

And match Arion 'mid the dolphin-shoals.

*Sing with me, flute, a song of Mænalus.*

Let earth become mid-seas. Forests, farewell !

Down from some heaven-girt mountain will I  
 plunge

Into the waves precipitate. Take, dear,

This gift, my latest ere I pass away. 70

*Cease, flute, cease now the song of Mænalus."*

Thus Damon. What Alphesibœus then  
 Answered, ye Muses, tell. I can no more.

*A.* Bring water, and with woolly fillet  
 wreath

These altars, kindle choicest frankincense  
 And richest vervain, that through mystic rites  
 Some witless warping blast my lover's mind.  
 Nought for this purpose lacketh save a song.

*Lead from the town, my songs, lead Daphnis  
 home.*

Songs can draw down the very moon from  
 heaven, So

Circe transformed with songs Ulysses' crew,  
 The cold snake in the meads is split with songs.

*Lead from the town, my songs, lead Daphnis  
 home.*

Bound with these three threads of three several  
 hues

Thine image round these altars, lo ! I bear  
 Three times ; uneven numbers please the god.

*Lead from the town, my songs, lead Daphnis  
 home.*

Twine, Amaryll, three colours in three knots ;  
 Twine them and say but this : " Love-bonds I  
 twine."

*Lead from the town, my songs, lead Daphnis  
 home.* 90

As clay doth harden in the self-same fire  
 That melteth wax, even so may my love  
 Make Daphnis hard to others, soft to me.  
 Strew barley-meal, burn crackling bays in pitch,  
 Daphnis burns me ; I burn these bays o'er  
 him.

*Lead from the town, my songs, lead Daphnis  
 home.*

As when a heifer seeketh her lost mate  
 Through copse and lofty grove, and finds him  
 not ;

Weary and lorn on couches of green sedge  
 Beside a stream she sinks, nor recks to yield 100  
 To gathering night : may such a love possess  
 Daphnis, and be it far from me to heal.

*Lead from the town, my songs, lead Daphnis  
 home.*

This well-worn coat the recreant left with me,  
 Dear pledge of his return. Into thy lap,  
 Earth, I entrust it buried at my door.  
 Such pledge demands my Daphnis for its due.

*Lead from the town, my songs, lead Daphnis  
 home.*

Mœris himself gave me these poison-plants  
 Gathered in Pontus : Pontus hath great store. 110  
 By them he oft turned wolf before mine eyes  
 And lurked in underwoods, oft raised the  
 dead

Out of abysmal tombs, oft charmed away  
The embattled corn to wave in other fields.

*Lead from the town, my songs, lead Daphnis  
home.*

Bring, Amaryll, bring cinders out and cast  
Over thy head into a running stream,  
And look not back. With these will I assail  
Daphnis, for Daphnis fears nor god nor song.

*Lead from the town, my songs, lead Daphnis  
home.* 120

Lo! on the altar, while we linger here,  
The unlighted cinder flickers into flame.  
Good may it bode! Something it bodes for sure.  
Hylax barks on the threshold. Is it true?  
Or is 't that lovers weave them empty dreams?

*Cease! from the town comes Daphnis: cease,  
my songs.*

## ECLOGUE IX

LYCIDAS. MÆRIS.

*L.* PRAY, Mæris, whither wendest? To the town?

*M.* O Lycidas, this have we lived to see,  
Unfeared before : strange holders of our farm  
Say " This is mine : begone, ye farmers old !"  
Now crushed beneath the unresting wheel of  
Chance,  
To such we sorrowing bear these kids and pray  
A murrain with them.

*L.* I had heard, methought,  
From where the climbing mountains first begin  
To fall in gentle slopes adown the vale,  
Even to the water and the ancient grove 10  
Of windworn beeches, all the country side  
Was saved from harm by your Menalcas' songs.

*M.* Yea, thou hadst heard : 'twas thus that  
rumour ran.

But, Lycidas, amid this clash of arms  
Our songs avail no more than, as men say,  
Doves of Dodona when the eagle stoops.  
Had not from hollow holm-oak on my left  
A raven warned me to leave argument



Unsaid and yield, neither thy Mœris here  
 Nor great Menalcas had been living now. 20

*L.* Ah! can such evil fall on any man?  
 Ah me! so nearly had we lost thy charms,  
 So nearly thee, Menalcas! Who then else  
 Should hymn the Nymphs? Who strew the  
 ground with flowers?

Who shade the founts with curtain green? Who  
 sing

The melodies I caught from thee of late  
 Silently, when to darling Amaryll  
 Thy journey led? "Tityrus, short the way;  
 Till I return feed thou my milking goats,  
 And lead them fed to drink, and on the road 30  
 See thou cross not the billy-goat—he butts."

*M.* Nay these, which yet unfinished he sang  
 To Varus: "If but Mantua be saved,  
 Mantua to lost Cremona, ah! too near,  
 Varus, thy name shall tuneful-throated swans  
 Bear upward to the stars."

*L.* So may thy bees  
 Shun yews of Corsica, so may thy kine  
 Pastured on good lucerne their udders fill.  
 If aught thou hast, begin. The Muses made  
 Me too a singer, yea, I too have songs 40  
 And shepherds call me bard. I trust them  
 not.

For I, methinketh, utter nought as yet

Worthy of Varius's or Cinna's muse ;  
 I gabble gooselike 'mid those swans of song.

*M.* E'en now the silent broodings of my heart,  
 Lycidas, are hot therewith, if memory  
 May call it back, for 'tis a noble song.

" Hither, O Galatea ; sad sea-waves  
 Make sorry playground. Here is shining spring,  
 Here amid streams blow many-coloured  
 flowers, 50

Here poplars hoary-tressed droop o'er the cave,  
 And lo ! the limber vine plaits leafy bowers.  
 Hither ! and let mad billows beat the strand."

*L.* What of those songs I heard thee sing  
 alone

One cloudless night ? Well do I know the tune  
 If but the words would come.

*M.* " O Daphnis, why  
 Scannest the risings of the ancient stars ?  
 Now peereth Dionæan Cæsar's star,  
 The star that comes to bless the field with fruits  
 And flush on sunny hills the reddening grape. 60  
 Daphnis, engraft thy pears, for thee, thy sons  
 And their seed after them."

Time bears away

All things, even the mind : oft in my youth  
 I sang a livelong summer's day to sleep.  
 But now my songs are all forgot, and Mœris  
 Mourns for his very voice : some leering wolf

Hath eyed incautious Mœris. But nathless  
Menalcas oft enough will sing thee those.

*L.* Thy pleas prolong my eagerness. Behold,  
The dreaming sea hath lulled her tide for thee, 70  
And stilled is every moan of murmuring winds.  
Here half the way is done : Bianor's grave  
Is seen afar : here where the husbandmen  
Harvest the leafy trees, here let us sing.  
Lay down the kids ; 'tis near enough to town.  
But if we fear lest darkness gather rain,  
Let us sing carols all the way : 'twill be  
Less tedious ; I will ease thee of thy load,  
So shall our song be light.

*M.* Boy, say no more.

Let us perform the present task : these songs 80  
We shall sing better when Menalcas comes.

## ECLOGUE X

GALLUS.

O GRANT me this last labour, Arethuse.  
A few songs for my Gallus must be sung,  
A few, yet worthy of Lycoris' ears.  
Who would grudge songs to Gallus? So from  
thee

When thou shalt underglide Sicilian waves,  
May bitter Doris fend her brine. Begin :  
The fretful loves of Gallus let us sing,  
While the flat-muzzled goats soft boscage browse.  
Not sole are we : the listening woods reply.

What woods or glades hid you, ye Naiad  
maids, 10

When Gallus lay a-dying of a love  
That none requited? For ye lingered not  
On Pindus or Parnassus, or beside  
Aonian Aganippe then. Him lying  
'Neath a lone oak e'en bays and tamarisks  
Bewept, yea, e'en pine-crested Mænalus,  
Even the crags of cold Lycæus mourned.  
Around us stand the sheep. They scorn us not ;  
And think no scorn of them, thou bard divine :  
E'en lovely Adonis pastured sheep by streams. 20

The shepherd and slow-footed swineherd came,  
And dripping from the autumn acorn-woods  
Menalcas. "Whence that love of thine?" they  
cry.

Apollo came: "Gallus, ah, why so mad?  
Thy loved Lycoris through the inclement camp  
And snowy march follows another flame."

So spake Apollo. Came Silvanus too,  
With rural glory crowned, and brandishing  
Fennels and giant lilies in his hand.

Came Pan the god of Arcady: our eyes 30  
Saw him, his cheeks incarnadined with blood  
Of elder-berries and vermilion dye.

"Shall there not be an end?" he said, "for this  
Love cares not: grass is sated not with rills,  
Nor goats with leaves, nor bees with sweet lucerne,  
Nor cruel Love with tears." But sadly he:

"Yet this, Arcadians, ye shall ever sing  
Unto your mountains; none are skilled as ye.  
O then how calm will be my last long sleep,  
If but your flute e'er celebrate my loves! 40

O that I had been counted one of you,  
To keep your flock or cull your mellow grapes;  
Whether 'twere Phyllis or Amyntas or—

Whoe'er my flame. Amyntas, art thou dark?

Yet dark are violets and hyacinths—

'Mid willow-trees and limber vines with me

I trow my love would lie. Garlands for me

Would Phyllis pluck, Amyntas sing me songs.  
 Here are cool founts, Lycoris, here soft meads,  
 And copses : here fain would I swoon with  
 thee 50

Till time bring death. But thee mad Passion  
 holds

Servant of stubborn Mars 'mid hurtling spears  
 And brunt of battle. Thou far from thy home,  
 Lone and without me, yet unsorrowing  
 (Ah ! 'tis too true), beholdest Alpine snows  
 And frozen Rhine. May the frost harm thee not !  
 May the rough ice cut not thy delicate feet !

I will away, and my Eubœan rhymes  
 Will tune to the Sicilian shepherd's reed.

My purpose holds to suffer in the woods 60  
 And dens of savage beasts, to grave my loves  
 On sapling trees, so shall grow tree and love  
 Together. Meantime with a rout of Nymphs  
 I will range Mænalus, or hunt fierce boars.

No frost shall e'er forbid me to beset  
 Arcadian glades with hounds. I seem e'en now  
 To fare through rocks and bellowing groves, with  
 joy

Speeding the Cretan shaft from Parthian bow.  
 As though such physic could my fever cool,  
 As though that god could melt at human  
 pain ! 70

Now neither Hamadryads, nay, nor songs

Please us : ye very woods, once more begone !  
No pains of ours have power to change his mind,  
Nor if we drink the ice-bound Hebrus or  
Suffer Sithona's snows and wintry rains,  
Nor if we tend beneath the scorching Crab  
The flocks of Ethiopia, where the bark  
Shrivels and perishes on lofty elms.

Love conquers all : we too must yield to Love."

This will suffice your poet to have sung, 80  
O divine Muses, while he sat and wove  
A basket of thin mallow : ye will add  
New grace for Gallus, him for whom my love  
Groweth from hour to hour as alders green  
Upshoot in early spring. Arise : 'tis late.  
Baneful is shade to singers, baneful is  
The shade of junipers : earth's kindly fruits  
Are marred by shade. Go home, my full-fed  
goats,  
Cometh the Evening Star, my goats, go home.





THE GEORGICS OF VIRGIL



Thou that seest Universal  
Nature moved by Universal Mind ;  
Thou majestic in thy sadness  
At the doubtful doom of human kind.

TENNYSON.



BOOK I  
OF HUSBANDRY



## BOOK I

### OF HUSBANDRY

WHAT makes the valleys laugh and sing, what  
star

Should speed the plough and marry vine to elm,  
The care of kine and how to rear a flock,  
What skill shall keep the parsimonious bee,  
Hence is my song, Mæcenas. O ye stars,  
The brilliant escort of the gliding year ;  
Liber and bounteous Ceres, if ye bade  
Earth change the acorn for the fattening ear,  
And with pure water mix the new-found grape ;  
Ye Fauns, the guardian angels of the farm, 10  
Ye Fauns, and Dryad maidens, join the dance :  
I sing your favours. Thou, whose trident-blow  
Compelled the earth to yield the neighing horse,  
Neptune ; thou warden of the sacred groves,  
The herdsman of three hundred snow-white  
kine,  
That tear the lush grass in the Cean isle ;  
And Pan, great shepherd, leave thy native grove,  
Leave the Lycæan glades : if aught thou carest  
For thine own Mænalus, thy present help  
I ask, O god of Tegea, for my task. 20

Minerva, planter of the olive-tree ;  
 Thou, boy-inventor of the curvèd plough ;  
 Silvanus, bearing uptorn from the roots  
 A sapling cypress ; gods and goddesses,  
 All ye who carefully protect the fields,  
 And rear new fruits unsown by human hand,  
 And send the generous rain upon the crops ;  
 And thou, great Cæsar, though 'tis not revealed  
 What company of gods will greet thee friend,  
 Whether to visit towns and care for states 30  
 Thy pleasure is, and that the mighty earth  
 May hail thee nursing-sire of fruits and lord  
 Of sun and shower, crowned with thy mother's  
 tree ;<sup>1</sup>

Whether the boundless sea confess thy sway  
 And sailors' prayers to thee alone ascend,  
 Far Thule worship thee, and for her child  
 Tethys endower thee with all her waves ;  
 Whether thou take thy place among the stars  
 And urge the drudging months, where empty  
 space

Between the Virgin and the chasing Claws 40  
 Invites thee—lo ! to thee the Scorpion folds  
 His hot limbs and yields half his share of sky—  
 Whate'er thy choice—for neither Tartarus  
 Dare hail thee king, nor may so reckless be  
 Thy lust of tyranny, though Grecian hearts

<sup>1</sup> The myrtle, sacred to Venus. Cf. *Ecl.* vii. 66.



Dream wonders of Elysium, and though  
Proserpina heed not her mother's call—  
Grant that my course be smooth, and prosper  
this

My venturous enterprise, and with me cast  
Upon the groping rustic pity's eye, 50  
Then take thy throne and love the frequent  
prayer.

When spring awakes, and from the snow-clad  
peak  
Cold streamlets trickle, and at Zephyr's breath  
Crumbles and cracks the clod, straight on the  
plough  
Lean until ox complain and share reflect  
The deep-ploughed soil. That harvest best of all  
Repays the greedy farmer for his prayers  
Which twice has felt the summer, twice the frost ;  
Lo ! burst his barns with surfeiting of grain.  
But ere the untried surface we explore, 60  
First we must learn the changeful moods of  
heaven,  
And all the winds, and of each several field  
The natural character, what this consents,  
What that declines to bear. Here cereals thrive,  
There grapes more gladly ripen, here again  
Green saplings flourish and unbidden grass.  
Behold how Tmolus perfumed saffron sends,

How India ivory, and how the soft  
 Sabæans incense, while Chalybians nude  
 Forge us our steel, and Pontic shores supply 70  
 The stinking castor, and Epirus breeds  
 The mares that win upon the Eleän plain.  
 Thus on each region Nature long ago  
 Her stern necessities and changeless laws  
 Imposed, what time into the empty world  
 Deucalion cast the stones that yielded men,  
 Their hardy sons. Come, then, be strong to toil ;  
 Soon as the year begins your stoutest bulls  
 Must turn the rich land, that the inverted clods  
 Be baked by dusty summer's riper suns. 80  
 But if the land is poor, 'twill be enough  
 To drive a shallow blade beneath the Bear :  
 There, lest rank weeds annoy the abundant crop,  
 Here, lest its hard-won moisture leave the sand.

Each second season let the stubbles lie  
 And arm themselves with solid idleness ;  
 Or 'neath another star sow golden corn,  
 Where last you harvested the wealthy pods  
 Of quivering pulse, or else the slender vetch  
 And bitter lupine with its brittle stalks, 90  
 A rustling forest. For repeated crops  
 Of poppies, sleepy things, or flax or oats  
 Scorch up the plain, which yet will bear them well  
 If regular rotation be observed.

Only fear not to soak with generous dung  
The thirsty ground, fear not to scatter wide  
The grimy cinder o'er the exhausted fields.  
A change of crop will also rest the land,  
Which thus is saved from lying month by month  
A thankless fallow. Often too 'tis good 100  
To burn the stubbles and with crackling flames  
Consume the empty stalks: whether from thence  
The earth derives a hidden store of strength  
And fattening food, or whether 'tis that fire  
Bakes out the subtlest vice and sweats away  
Excessive damp, or whether by the heat  
New pores are opened and the choked are  
cleared,  
And so the young blade fed; or does the fire  
Harden the earth and bind the gaping cracks,  
A shield against the piercing rain, against 110  
The sun's intemperate ardour, yea, a shield  
Against the North wind's penetrating cold?

He mightily assists the fields who breaks  
With hoes the idle lumps, and harrows them  
With wattled withies; golden Ceres smiles  
From high Olympus on his industry;  
Him too she loves who ploughs from end to end,  
Then turns his share and makes a flank attack  
On the long ridge, who constant at his post  
Harasses and subdues the stubborn earth. 120

For dripping summers, sunny winters pray :  
 Blithest the crop that winter wraps in dust,  
 Blithest the field ; no cultivation else  
 Makes Mysia so proud, or Gargara  
 So startled at its own fertility.  
 What of the man who casts the missile seed,  
 Then closes with the fields and lays the heaps  
 Of barren sand ; next to the seedling crops  
 Escorts the purity of running streams ?  
 When the burnt field's agape with dying  
     blade, 130  
 Lo ! from some sloping eminence he lures  
 The channelled waves, which wake 'mid pebbles  
     smooth  
 Rough melodies, and with refreshing spray  
 Slake the parched land. What shall I say of  
     him  
 Who, lest the big ears bow the o'erweighted  
     stalk,  
 Feeds down the extravagance in tender youth,  
 When ridge and blade are level ? What of him  
 Who drains the stagnant swamp with thirsty  
     sand,  
 Most chiefly in the fickle months when streams  
 O'erflow their banks, and the whole country-  
     side 140  
 In slimy mantle dress, whence shallow pools  
 Lie sweating out their moisture to the sun.

And yet when man and beast have spared no  
pains

To tame the earth, the unconscionable goose,  
Strymonian crane and bitter succory  
Cease not to plague ; likewise the grievous shade.  
No easy path the earth's Creator willed :  
He first taught method as the means, and spurred  
The wits of men by cares, and suffered not  
His realms to slumber 'neath inveterate sloth. 150  
Before Jove's reign no farmers tilled the soil ;  
No fence or boundary-stone to mark the fields  
Religion sanctioned : to the common store  
All labour tended, and the earth herself  
Gave all more freely for that no man asked.  
Then Jove endowed that cursèd thing, the snake,  
With venom, and the wolf with thirst for blood,  
Lashed the still sea, shook honey off the trees,  
Robbed men of fire and emptied river-beds  
Which flowed apace with wine, to make men  
prove 160

And hammer out by practice divers arts,  
Now slowly learning how to plough and sow,  
Now striking from flint-vein the lurking fire.  
Then rivers first the hollowed alder felt ;  
Then sailors told the number of the stars  
And called them by their names, the brilliant  
Bear,  
Lycaon's child, Pleiad and Hyad too ;

Then came the wiles of trapping and the use  
Of birdlime, then too hounds were trained to  
watch

Large covert-sides. And some with cast-net  
flog 170

The river's breadth and try the deepest pools,  
While others scour the sea with dripping mesh.  
Then strident saws were born of stubborn steel—  
For logs were cleft with splintering wedge  
before—

Then divers arts ensued. Toil conquered all,  
Unconquerable Toil, and Poverty,  
The spur of would-be idlers. Ceres first,  
When arbuté-berries failed and oaks denied  
The wonted acorn in Dodona's woods,  
Taught men the use and method of the  
plough. 180

Soon corn received its special plagues: the  
stalks

Were gnawed by mildew, and the thistle reared  
Its head of sloth: death takes the crops, up  
comes

A mass of matted undergrowth, behold  
Clivers and caltrops, o'er the smiling tilth  
Wild oat and darnel hold their barren sway!  
So ply your hoes and give the weeds no peace,  
Scare birds with noise, correct the leafy hedge  
Too lavish with its shade, pray hard for rain.

Neglect these things, lo! 'neath your helpless  
gaze 190

Another's barns shall overflow, while you  
From woodland oak shall shake a scanty meal.

Now hear what weapons hardy rustics need  
Ere they can plough or sow the crop to come :  
Firstly a ploughshare and the curvèd plough  
With massive frame, and next the lumbering  
wains

Of Eleusinian Ceres, threshing-boards  
Wheel-less and wheeled, and hoes of crushing  
weight ;

Cheap wicker-ware of Celeüs besides,  
Harrows of wattled arbute, winnowing fans 200  
Of dread Iacchus. These must you provide  
And store up long beforehand, else you lose  
The glorious guerdon that God's earth affords.  
The growing elm by mighty force is tamed  
To ploughbeam and the form of curvèd plough.  
Eight feet of pole are fastened at its root,  
Twin earth-boards and share-beam with double  
spine,

And handle to control it from behind.  
A lime that weighs so light, or towering beech,  
Is felled beforehand for the yoke: their  
strength 210

Is hung above the hearth and searched by smoke

Mæcenas, many ancient rules I know,  
 Unless I weary thee by chronicling  
 The petty cares of farming. First of all  
 The threshing-floor by giant rolling-stone  
 Is levelled, kneaded by the hand, and mixed  
 With holding clay to strengthen it, lest weeds  
 Creep through, and drought cause gaping cracks,  
 and then

The vermin come and mock : the tiny mouse  
 Is wont to build his house and barns beneath, 220  
 Or eyeless moles to excavate their beds ;  
 The toad is found in holes ; all noxious beasts  
 That plague the earth appear ; the weevil spoils  
 Enormous heaps of grain, the emmet too  
 With cautious forethought for her helpless age.

Now mark you, when throughout the wood  
 you see

The walnut-trees in flower, and bending low  
 Their fragrant boughs : if all the blossoms set,  
 Good crops will follow them, and great will be  
 The threshing, great will be the summer heat ; 230  
 But if in wealth of leaves the shade excels,  
 You thresh in vain a liberal crop of straw.  
 Oft have I seen a sower dress his seed  
 With soda and black lees of olive oil,  
 To plump the beans within the specious pod  
 And make them quickly sodden, though the fire



Be very small beneath. I have known seed,  
 Selected carefully with time and pains,  
 Revert to type, unless the human hand  
 Chose out the biggest year by year. Thus  
     fate 240

Drags all to ruin with a backward pull ;  
 As when a rower hardly drives his boat  
 Against the stream : if once he drop his arms,  
 Forthwith the rushing current whirls him down.

Then we must watch Arcturus and the Kids  
 And the bright Snake, what time they rise and  
     set,  
 Like wind-tossed sailors on their homeward way  
 Tempting the Pontus and the oyster-fraught  
 Jaws of Abydus. When the Balance strikes  
 Equality of time for work and sleep, 250  
 And now divides the day in equal parts  
 Of light and dark, then, swains, exert your kine,  
 Sow fields with barley to the very verge  
 Of winter and the impracticable rains.  
 Now too 'tis time to sow a field with flax  
 Or poppies, Ceres' friend. Delay no more :  
 Lean on the plough while yet the earth is dry  
 And rain-clouds fall not. Beans are sown in  
     spring ;  
 Then too the crumbling soil receives lucerne,  
 And millet's yearly crop, what time the Bull 260

Milk-white with gold horns openeth the year,  
 While foot by foot the Dog gives ground and  
 sinks.

But if for barns of wheat and hardy spelt  
 You cultivate the ground, and rest your hopes  
 On corn alone, first let the morning hide  
 Atlas his daughters, and the fiery Crown  
 Of Cretan fame depart, before you trust  
 The furrows with the seed, their due, and haste  
 To lend a year's hope to the reluctant earth.

Many begin ere Maia's star has set, 270  
 Whose hopes are ever mocked with empty ears.  
 But if you sow the vetch or kidney bean,  
 Nor scorn Pelusian lentils, then is given  
 No doubtful warning when Boötes sets.  
 Begin and sow on half-way through the frosts.

Therefore the heaven is strictly portioned out  
 And told by twelve stars to obey the sun.  
 Five zones possess it ; one reflects the sun's  
 Perpetual splendour and perpetual heat ;  
 To right and left two keep the utmost flanks, 280  
 Steel-blue, regions of ice and murky rain ;  
 Twixt these twain and the first, two were  
 vouchsafed  
 By God's grace to poor mortals, and a path  
 Was cleft between them through the midst, that  
 here

The stellar host might slant its rolling march.  
As leaps the world to Scythia aloft  
And the Rhipæan heights, so does it sink  
Crestfall'n to Libya's south. This pole looks  
down

From high above us always ; that one lies  
Deep 'neath the Stygian gloom and unseen  
dead. 290

Here like some mighty river glides the Snake  
With tortuous windings round and through the  
Bears,

The Bears that fear to dip in Ocean's wave.  
There, men say, is the calm of timeless night  
And curtained thraldom of eternal dark ;  
Or remeant Morn leads back from us the day,  
And soon as we glow with the breath of East,  
There blushing Evening lights her vigil fires.  
Hence is it that we read the ambiguous sky  
And foretell storms, and hence we choose the  
day 300

Proper for harvest and the time to sow,  
And when 'tis safe to smite the treacherous main  
With oars, and when to launch the sailing-  
ships,

Or seasonably cut a pine-tree down.  
No fools are we that muse upon the stars,  
Their risings and their settings, and the four  
Equal yet diverse seasons of the year.

Should chilly downpour keep the swain at  
 home,  
 Much, that ere long he must have done in haste  
 'Neath fairer skies, can now be done at ease : 310  
 He whets for use the blunt share's iron tooth,  
 Makes grape-troughs from a tree-trunk, brands  
 his beasts,  
 And stamps the proper numbers on his bins,  
 Or sharpens stakes and two-pronged forks, and  
 cuts  
 Amerian withies for the buxom vine.  
 Now is the time to weave of bramble wands  
 The supple basket, now to dry your corn  
 And crush it with a stone. E'en holy days  
 Have duties granted them by God and man :  
 No ordinance forbids to flood young crops, 320  
 To fence the standing corn, set traps for birds,  
 Burn rebel thorns, and plunge the bleating flock  
 In health-renewing brook. Often with oil  
 Or apples cheap the ass's driver loads  
 His crawling charge, returning home from town  
 With dented millstone or black lump of pitch.

The Moon herself has sown good luck and ill  
 Among her days : avoid the fifth : on that  
 Pale Orcus and the Eumenides were born ;  
 Then Earth, O horror ! dread Typhœus bare, 330  
 Cœus, Iapetus and brothers three

That swore to ope the gates of heaven. Three  
times

They strove to place Ossa on Pelion,  
So runs the story, and up Ossa roll  
Bosky Olympus to the top : three times  
The Father smote asunder with his bolt  
The castled mountains. Choose the seventeenth  
day

For planting vines and taking up young steers  
To train, and adding leash to warp ; the ninth  
Is dear to runaways but bad for thieves. 340

A host of labours in the cool of night,  
Or when at early dawn the Morning star  
Bedews the earth, are with less labour done.  
The brittle stubble and the parchèd mead  
Night softens for the scythe ; the gentle dew  
Fails not at night. Through the long lamp-lit  
hours

Sits one torch-pointing with his sharpest blade ;  
The while his wife consoles his tedious toil  
With song, and runs her shrill comb through the  
warp,

Or on a great fire boils the sweet must down, 350  
And skims the billows of the stormy pot  
With leafen ladle.

But the ruddy corn  
At summer's height we cut ; our threshing-floors

Behold at summer's height the toasted grain.  
 Plough stripped, sow stripped; winter brings  
 idleness

To husbandmen: 'tis then that they enjoy  
 Their gains, and feast each other with good  
 cheer;

For good King Winter shall unbind their cares:  
 As when a heavy-laden ship has touched 359  
 Its haven, and the exultant crew has crowned  
 The stern with flowers. Yet even now 'tis time  
 To strip the oak of acorns and the bay  
 Of berries, and to gather olive fruit  
 And blood-juiced myrtles; aye, to snare the  
 crane

And net the stag, to hunt the long-eared hare  
 And shoot the doe, whirling the hempen thongs  
 Of Baleàric sling, what time the snow  
 Lies deep, and rivers are a sheet of ice.

Dost bid me sing of autumn stars and  
 storms, 369

And what to fear when summer days grow cool,  
 And shadows earlier creep? or when spring  
 showers

Fall, while the plummy harvest now stands forth  
 Embattled on the plain, the milky ears  
 Swelling with fatness on the fair green stalk?  
 Oft when the husbandman to golden fields

Had led the reaper, and from brittle stem  
Now strewed the barley, saw I every wind  
Clash in a battle shock, and far and wide  
Tear from its earthy home and hurl aloft  
The pregnant crop : so savagely the storm 380  
Bore the light haulm and flying straw away.  
Oft a great host of waters holds the heaven,  
And marshalled from on high the swollen clouds  
Amass a hideous storm ; down drops the sky,  
And all the oxen's toil and happy crops  
Drowns in a mighty deluge ; dykes are filled,  
And with a roar the hollow rivers grow,  
And seethes through every panting creek the  
main.

Throned in the rain-cloud midnight Jove  
himself  
Wields his great bolts with luminous hand ; the  
earth 390  
Trembles and quakes ; beasts flee and panic fear  
Brings low the hearts of nations ; He o'erthrows  
Athos, Ceraunia or Rhodope  
With spear of flame ; louder the South wind  
howls,  
Thicker the rain beats ; threshed by hurricanes  
Now woodland wails, now seashore moans reply.

Then watch and pray : each month observe  
the stars ;

See whither Saturn's chilly orb retires,  
 And mark the wandering fires of Mercury, 399  
 What paths they roam. Above all fear the gods,  
 And on the blithe grass slaughter every year  
 A victim to great Ceres, when the storms  
 Of winter cease and now 'tis sunny spring.  
 Then lambs are fat, then mellowest the wine,  
 Sweet then is sleep, and deep the mountain  
 shade.

Bid all the young hinds help you to adore  
 Ceres, and bring her honeycombs, with milk  
 And sweet wine mixed, and lead the auspicious  
 lamb

Thrice round the firstfruits, while the youthful  
 band

All jubilant attend, with lusty shout 410  
 Inviting Ceres to their homes. Let none  
 Set sickle to the ripe corn ere he wreath  
 His brows with twinèd oaken spray, and praise  
 Queen Ceres with rude verse and ruder dance.

Moreover, that we surely might foreknow  
 Hot days, and wet, and cold-compelling winds,  
 Great Jove ordained what warnings on her way  
 The monthly Moon should shew: what sign  
 should lull  
 The South wind, what repeated sight should  
 urge



The swain to drive his fatlings nearer home. 420  
 Straight, when the winds arise, either the sea  
 Rages and swells, and on the lofty hills  
 Are heard dry cracklings, or the strand rolls far  
 Its thunderous discords, and the vocal woods  
 Increase their sighing. Verily the wave  
 Hardly forbears to whelm the curvèd ships,  
 When gulls fly swiftly from the open sea  
 And carry harsh cries shorewards, when on land  
 The amphibious cormorant disports, and  
     hens 429  
 Forsake their swamp to soar above the clouds.  
 Oft you shall see the stars, when wind is near,  
 Shoot headlong from the sky, and through the  
     night  
 Leave in their wake long whitening seas of  
     flame ;  
 Oft you shall see light straw and fallen leaves  
 Dance in the gusts, and feathers on a pond  
 Join hands and play. But when the lightning  
     darts  
 From savage North, and thunder-peals resound  
 From East and West, then all the land's aswim  
 With brimming dykes, and every mariner  
 Reefs his wet canvas. Never unawares 440  
 Does rain attack men : either cranes descend  
 From cloudland and take covert in deep vales,  
 Or heifers sniff the breeze with nose in air,

Or swallows circle shrieking round the pool,  
 And mudlark froggy chants his ancient strain.  
 Oft too the ant from inner sanctuaries  
 Brings out her eggs, wearing a narrow path.  
 The giant rainbow drinks, and from the fields,  
 With humming of interminable wings, 449  
 The rooks, an endless army, wend their way.  
 All kinds of sea-birds and all Asia's fowl  
 That probe the mudflats round Caÿster's stream,  
 Their marshy paradise, in emulous joy  
 Will deluge back and wings with drenching  
 spray ;

Now you may see them run to meet the surf,  
 Now plunge beneath the billows, wantoning  
 In bathing's frolic luxury. Then the crow,  
 That wicked fowl, keeps calling for the rain  
 With all his voice, in splendid solitude  
 Pacing the dry sea-sand. Even at night, 460  
 Wool-carding maidens at their lamp-lit task  
 Foreknow the coming storm, for lo ! their oil  
 Sputters, and mouldy fungus forms around.

When rain is past, fair days and open calms  
 You may no less foresee and recognise  
 By sure signs : for the brightness of the stars  
 Does not seem minished then, nor does the moon  
 Appear beholden to her brother's rays ;  
 No woolly cloudlets flit across the sky, 469

Nor halcyons, loved of Thetis, spread their wings  
On shore to evening suns ; and filthy swine  
Forget to toss their loosened beds of straw.  
The mists, more deeply bosomed in the vales,  
Lie pillowed on the plain ; from highest roof  
The screech-owl sees the twilight sun to rest,  
And fills the deaf sky with her vesper hymns.  
High in the clear blue dome the osprey hangs :  
Where makes her speedy way through spersèd air  
The ciris, lo ! with a rush of wings he stoops, 479  
Vengeful and fierce ; baffled he mounts again,  
And she meanwhile cleaves faster than before  
Her aëry way. Thus Nisus is avenged,  
And Scylla expiates the severed hair.  
Then rooks thrice and again subdue their  
throats  
And babble softly : often revelling  
In some great joy, on their aërial beds  
They gossip 'mid the leaves ; when showers are  
o'er,  
So glad to see their nurseries again  
And much-loved little ones. Think you that  
God  
Has given them some spark of wit divine, 490  
Or Fate some deeper insight ? Hardly this.  
Nay, when the wind veers and the docile clouds  
Have changed their course, and from the watery  
South

Jove turns the dry to mist and haze to clear,  
 The phases of their minds are changed : their  
 breasts

Conceive emotions now far otherwise  
 Than when the storm-wind drove the scudding  
 clouds ;

Hence is that rural concert of the birds  
 And joy of beasts and rooks grown musical. 499

But if the fiery sun you watch, and moons  
 In ordered sequence, you shall ne'er mistake  
 To-morrow's hour, nor shall you be beguiled  
 By nights of specious calm. When first the  
 moon

Recalls her truant fires, if she embrace  
 Black air with misty arms, then land and sea  
 Must soon expect a firmament of rain ;  
 And if a virgin blush suffuse her face,  
 Prepare for wind ; for wind she'll surely blush.  
 But if at her fourth rising—for the fourth  
 Gives men the wisest counsel—she is clear, 510  
 And moves through ether with unblunted horns,  
 All that same morrow and its brother days,  
 Until the month be ended, will be free  
 From rain and wind ; sailors returning safe  
 Shall pay their vows to Glaucus, Panope  
 And Ino's son. The sun, too, giveth signs  
 Both orient and when plunging 'neath the waves ;

Unerring signs accompany the sun,  
Some early, some when stars begin to rise.  
If e'er embosomed in a cloud at dawn 520  
He deck his dappled orb with spots, and blear  
The middle of his disc, beware of showers ;  
For from the deep the South wind drives  
    amain  
O'er woodland, farm and fold. When at sunrise  
Through banks of cloud the scattered rays peep  
    out,  
Or when with pallid cheek Aurora leaves  
Tithonus' saffron couch, ah ! then the leaf  
Shall hardly save the mellow grape, the hail  
So madly romps upon the rattling roofs.  
This, too, 'twill profit to recall, what time 530  
The sun has crossed the heavens to his rest :  
Often we notice divers wandering hues  
Upon his face : blue forecasts rain ; east wind  
Is told by red ; but if dark spots begin  
To mingle with a fiery glow, then all  
Will be one raging sea of wind and rain.  
Let no man urge me on that night to tempt  
The deep, or loose my cable from the shore.  
But if the sun both bring and hide the day  
With face untarnished, clouds shall fright you  
    not ; 540  
The woods shall sway to North wind pure and  
    dry.

Then what the evening shadows bring, whence  
comes

The calming breeze that banishes the clouds,  
The secrets of the moisture-laden South,  
All this the sun will tell. Who dares accuse  
The sun of falsehood? He it is that warns  
Of dark seditions, treachery, and wars  
Of hidden growth. Yea, he it was that shewed  
At Cæsar's death compassion upon Rome,  
Veiling in umber haze his dazzling head, 550  
When froward mortals feared eternal night.  
But at that time the earth and sea besides,  
Unseasonable birds and hell-sent dogs,  
Gave portents. Often Etna 'neath our gaze  
Burst her great furnaces and shed her heart  
O'er Cyclopean fields, a boiling flood  
Of liquid rocks and solid balls of flame!  
The Germans heard the din of heavenly wars;  
Unwonted tremors shook the Alps; a voice 559  
Of awful power rang through the silent groves;  
Pale phantoms of strange aspect were espied  
Through the night shadows; beasts were heard  
to speak,  
O horror! rivers stood, earth oped her mouth,  
Bronze statues sweated, ivory shed tears.  
Whirling the woods away in one mad eddy,  
Eridanus the king of rivers rose,  
And carried steer and stall across the plains.

Nor at that time did entrails cease to shew  
The gloomy threats of filaments, nor wells  
To run with blood, nor high-built citadels 570  
To echo to the nightly howl of wolves.

Never so oft before did bolts descend  
From azure skies, or awful meteors blaze.  
So once again Philippi's land beheld  
The clash of Roman ranks, of Roman steel ;  
Nor were the gods displeas'd that twice our  
blood

Should glut the lean earth of Emathia  
And Hæmus' broad champaign. The time will  
come,

I doubt not, when the farmer on those plains, 579  
Driving his bent plough deep, will bring to light  
Old weapons, rough and rusted half away,  
Or strike on headless helms his heavy hoes,  
And gaze in wonder on the giant bones  
Uprooted from their earthy sepulchres.

O native gods and heroes, Romulus,  
And mother Vesta, guardian of the stream  
Of Tuscan Tiber and our Palatine,  
This prince at least forbid ye not to save  
A fallen generation ! Blood enough  
Long have we shed to purge the treachery 590  
Of Troy's Laomedon ; long have the halls  
Of heaven, O Cæsar, envied us thy rule,

Vexed that thou lov'st the palms of earth, a  
place

Where right and wrong unseat each other, where  
Wars roll unceasingly and wickedness  
Assumes a thousand faces ; to the plough  
Due honour is denied ; fields lie unkempt,  
For war has stolen the husbandmen away,  
And straightened all their sickles into swords.  
Euphrates here, there Germany makes war, 600  
And sister-cities, spurning mutual faith,  
Rear adverse standards ; everywhere is war,  
Unrighteous war : as when the four-horse cars  
Dash from their bars and seize the course ; idly  
Each driver holds the reins, his whirling team  
Obey him not, and their will is his law.

END OF BOOK I



BOOK II  
OF TREES



## BOOK II

### OF TREES

THUS far of husbandry, thus far of stars  
That rule the months ; now will I hymn the  
vine,  
And all the company of greenwood shrubs,  
Yea, and the olive's slowly-growing child.  
Hither, O vintage-lord ; here all is full  
Of thy good gifts ; for thee the vineyard laughs  
With autumn leafiness, for thee the juice  
O'erbrims the foaming vat ; O god of wine,  
Come hither, cast thy buskin, and with me  
Imbrue thy bare foot in the virgin must. 10

Now firstly trees have birth in many ways :  
For some by man unasked grow up apace  
Quite wilfully, and overrun the plains  
And winding rivers : willows hoary-leaved,  
Poplars, lithe osiers and the supple broom.  
But others rise from fallen seed : such are  
The lofty chestnut and Jove's forest-king,  
The æsculus, and oak of voice divine  
To men of Hellas. Others from the root  
Throw out a lavish undergrowth, as elms 20

And cherries ; even the Parnassian bay  
 Rears her small head from deep maternal shade.  
 These early methods Nature gave ; by these  
 Each bosk and shrub and holy wood grows green.

Others experience's course has found.  
 This nurseryman will plant a row of shoots  
 Torn from the weeping parent-stem ; while that  
 Will bury logs or sharpened poles or stakes  
 Twice-cleft ; some trees await the living arch  
 Of boughs depressed into their mother's soil ; 30  
 Others demand no root : their severed tops  
 Are rendered to the earth and sprout anew.  
 Nay, e'en from fragments of the olive-trunk,  
 Dry timber, roots will peep ; and oft we see  
 Tree mimic tree with debtless borrowings :  
 Pears change their face and grafted apples bear,  
 And plum-trees blush with stony cornel fruit.

Then list, ye swains, and learn the several  
 modes  
 Of planting every kind, and gently lead  
 Wild fruits beneath your hand, that so the  
 earth 40  
 Be nowhere idle. Mark how Ismarus  
 Is green with vines, how huge Taburnus wears  
 An olive vesture. Lend, O lend thine aid,  
 Mæcenas, my delight, most justly called

The chief part of my fame ; spread thy swift sails  
And speed with me across the vasty deep  
Whereon my ship is launched. I would not wish  
To reach the bounds of knowledge in my verse,  
Nay, not though I possessed a hundred tongues,  
A hundred mouths and voice of brass ; come  
near 50  
And hug the shore ; the land is in our grasp ;  
I will not test thy patience now with myth,  
Circumlocution and a prelude long.

What things by their unaided effort gain  
The shores of light, rear an unfruitful head,  
But proud and lusty ; for productive power  
Is in the soil. Yet even such, if man  
Engraft or move them to a well-worked trench,  
Renounce their sylvan creed and meekly take,  
With careful management, what shape you  
please. 60  
Yea, and the barren sucker from the roots  
Will do the same, if planted out afield  
And given space ; now with thick leaf and bough  
Its mother overshadows it and blasts  
Her tender offspring and its hope of fruit.  
The tree that haply springs from foundling seed  
Grows slow : posterity enjoys its shade ;  
Apples their juicy pedigrees forget,  
And starveling grapes will ripen for the birds.

All trees alike demand your toil, and all 70  
 Must with unstinted trouble be subdued  
 And made to march in line. But olive-trees  
 Are better reared from stocks, from layers  
 vines,

And Paphian myrtles from the solid wood ;  
 From suckers do men raise the hazel tough  
 And towering ash, and poplar's leafy shade  
 That crowned Alcides, and the acorn-bough  
 Of Jove Chaonian : e'en the lofty palm  
 Is born of suckers, and the destined pine  
 For perils on the sea. But arbuti 80  
 Have walnuts grafted on their rugged boles,  
 And barren planes bear healthy apple sprays ;  
 The chestnut blossoms on the whitening beech,  
 The mountain ash grows hoary with the pear,  
 And swine champ acorns in the elm-tree shade.

Nor by one method shall you graft and bud.  
 When buds from mid-bark peep into the day  
 And burst their slender cauls, a narrow slit  
 Is let into the swelling ; then a bud  
 Of alien birth is shut therein, and taught 90  
 To know the moist rind as a part of self.  
 Or knotless trunks are opened with the axe  
 And deeply cleft with wedges ; then insert  
 A cutting big with promise, and behold !  
 A mighty tree, with furniture complete,

Goes forth to greet the sun, and stands aghast  
At foreign leaves and fruit she cannot own.

Moreover, different varieties  
Are found of lusty elm, lotus and willow  
And Ida's cypresses ; and different 100  
Are fruitful olive-trees, Shuttles, Oblongs  
And pungent Bitters ; apples vary too  
All through the orchards of Alcinoüs ;  
Nor are the pear-tree scions all the same,  
Crustumian, Syrian and the Warden large.  
One kind of cluster hangs upon our trees,  
Another dangles from Methymna's vine ;  
Thasians there are and Mareotid whites  
(Rich soils prefer the second, light the first),  
Psithian for raisin wine, and dry Lagene, 110  
Plotting to mock the foot and trip the tongue ;  
Purple and Rathripe ; and what meed of  
verse,  
Rhætic, shall I accord thee ? Strive not so  
To rival aught from the Falernian stores.  
There's Aminnean, very sound, to which  
Tmolus and e'en the mighty Phanæ bow,  
And small Argitis, unsurpassed alike  
For lasting qualities and flow of juice.  
Nor, Rhodian, thee would I forget, so sure  
To please at second course both gods and  
men, 120

Nor, Ox-grape, thee, whose teats with fullness  
swell.

But all the many kinds and many names  
Are counted not, nor profits it to count ;  
He who would number them, the same would  
wish

To tell the tale of sand that Zephyr stirs  
On Libya's waste, or when the East wind drives  
Most vehemently on the ships, to know  
How many rollers reach the Ionian strand.

Not every land can nourish every tree.  
Rivers are fringed with willows ; alders grow 130  
In thick morasses ; rocky hills give birth  
To barren mountain-ashes ; myrtle-groves  
Grow strongest by the shore ; while Bacchus  
loves

An open eminence, and yews prefer  
North winds and cold. Behold where men  
subdue

The very limits of the world, behold  
The rude Gelonians in their paint, and homes  
Of Eastern Arabs : to each tree its land.  
Black ebony knows India alone,  
Sabæans only grow the incense-spray. 140

Need I describe to thee the balsam-bole  
Oozing sweet odours, and the berry fruit  
Of ever-verdant thorn ; or Ethiop groves



In woolly raiment soft and white, or how  
 The Chinese comb a silky fleece from leaves ;  
 Of woods that hang o'er India's ocean waves,  
 The farthest corner of the world, whose trees  
 No arrow can o'ershoot, so high they soar ?  
 Yet India's men can use the quiver well.  
 The citron-apple Media provides, 150  
 Blest fruit of bitter juice and lingering taste.  
 If e'er you fear the wicked step-dame's cup,  
 With poison-plants and horrid spells infused,  
 No help more present is, nor power so sure  
 To drive the deadly venom from the limbs.  
 The tree is huge and features well a bay,  
 And but that it diffuses perfume strong  
 Of other kind, a bay it is : its leaves  
 No breezes move, its flower most closely clings ;  
 With it the Medes relieve their lung-bound  
     sires 160  
 And tainted exhalations of the sick.

But neither Media's pageantry of woods,  
 Nor glorious Ganges, nay, nor Hermus' stream  
 Whose mud is gold, with Italy may vie ;  
 Not Bactra, India, nor sandy world  
 Of rich Panchæa, incense-queen. This land  
 No bulls with breath of fire have ever ploughed,  
 Here were no teeth of hideous dragon sown,  
 Nor human corn-field eared with helm and spear

Stood forth : but with the wine-god's Massic  
 dew 170

And pregnant crops it teems ; olives and kine  
 Possess it and increase. The war-horse hence  
 Invades the plain with step superb, and hence  
 White flocks, Clitumnus, and huge victim bulls,  
 Oft sprinkled with thy hallowed stream, have led  
 A Roman triumph to the temple doors.

Here spring ne'er fades and summer's reign  
 extends

To months that are not hers ; twice yeon the  
 ewes,

And twice the fruit-trees into season come.

But where are cruel tigers and the tribe 180  
 Of ravening lions, where the monkshood fell  
 That cheats the unhappy hand ? These are not  
 found ;

Nor scaly snakes so vast a train unfold,  
 Nor wreathe so many coils into a spire.

Consider all the noble works of men :

Cities magnificent by years of toil

On sheer rocks built, with age-encrusted walls,  
 And stately rivers gliding underneath.

What of the higher and the lower sea,

Of giant lakes, great Larius and thee, 190

Benacus, with thy ocean roar and roll ?

Why tell of harbours and the bar imposed

On Lake Lucrinus, and the fretful moan

Of angry seas, where breakers die without  
 And Julian waters laugh aloud within,  
 And where Tyrrhenic swell Avernian waves?  
 Rich veins of silver has our land displayed,  
 Rich copper-streams; with gold she flowed  
 amain.

A race of warriors has our land brought forth,  
 Marsian, Sabellian, and Ligurian 200  
 Inured to ill, and Volscian spearman true,  
 The Decii, Marii and Camilli famed,  
 The sons of Scipio proved in war, and thee,  
 Great Cæsar, thee, who in the farthest East  
 With conquering arm art warding from our hills  
 The coward Indian. Land of Saturn, hail!  
 Great mother of corn and wine, great mother of  
 men:

For thee I now essay the ancient themes  
 Of praise and skill, for thee I dare to ope  
 The sacred fountain-head and chant anew 210  
 Through Roman streets the song of Ascra's bard.<sup>1</sup>

Now learn the genius of each soil, its strength,  
 Its colour and its proper fertile power.  
 What lands are stubborn and what hills unkind,  
 Possessed by gravel, thorn and lean white clay,  
 These glory in the tree that Pallas loves,  
 The long-lived olive. You shall know the place:

<sup>1</sup> Hesiod.

Wild olives there abound and fields are strewn  
 With woodland berries. But a loamy land,  
 Rejoicing in sweet moisture, and a plain 220  
 That teems with grass and has a flowing breast,  
 Such as we often see from mountain-tops  
 Deep down, with streamlets filtering from the  
 heights

And bringing generous ooze, a pleasant spot  
 That courts the South wind and is rank with  
 fern

So hateful to the curvèd plough: some day  
 'Twill bring you lusty vines that run with juice,  
 So lavish is it with the grape, so free  
 With that good liquor which is poured from  
 gold

Unto the gods, when at the altar steps 230  
 Sleek Tuscans tune the ivory and we serve  
 The smoking entrails on their bending plates.

But if your mind be set on horse and ox,  
 Or lambing-pens, or goats that blast the tilth,  
 Seek far Tarentum's deeply-verdurous glades,  
 Or such a fair demesne as Mantua lost,  
 Cruelly robbed, the nurse of snowy swans  
 Along a reedy river: water-springs  
 And pasture green will never fail your flocks,  
 And all the grass that through a summer's  
 day 240

Your kine shall graze, one short night dewy-cool  
Will bring again. But swarthy-featured soil  
And greasy to the urgent plough, yet loose  
And friable—for ploughing mimics this—  
Is best for corn ; no other surface sends  
So many laden wagons toiling home.  
Or that is best from which the grumbling swain  
Has cleared the bushes and upset the sloth  
Of venerable thickets ; roots and all  
He lifts the ancient strongholds of the birds. 250  
Their nests forsaken up they soar ; the earth,  
But now unkempt, receives the plough and  
smiles.

The hungry gravel of the hills, indeed,  
Hardly affords to bees their humble fare,  
Cassia and rosemary ; and tufa rough  
And chalk all honeycombed by watersnakes  
Tell you that baneful serpents nowhere else  
Obtain sweet food and mazy homes so free.  
The land which breathes a transitory smoke  
And subtle mist, and drinks the moisture in 260  
To give it out at will, which clothes itself  
In year-long greenery, nor spoils your steel  
With rust and briny roughness, that will wreath  
A rich vine-tapestry about your elms ;  
Gladly it bears the olive, kind 'twill prove  
Beneath your hand to flock and crooked plough.  
Such wealthy Capua and the vales that lie

Beside Vesuvius till, such Clanius  
Whose flood Acerræ's desolate plains abhor.

Now learn how you may recognise your  
soil, 270

Foreknowing if 'tis loose or very stiff  
(For one kind favours corn, the other wine,  
The loose Lyæus and Ceres the stiff).  
First scan the ground with care, then sink a well  
Deep in a firm place, shovel back the earth  
And try to tread it level ; if its bulk  
Be not enough, 'tis thin and suited best  
To flocks and juicy vines ; but if its home  
Refuses to receive it, and the soil  
Superfluously lies atop the pit, 280  
The land is close ; prepare for sticky clods  
And stubborn ridges ; strong must be your kine  
For taming such a field. But land that's salt  
And bears a bitter name—a worthless land,  
That neither bears nor hearkens to the plough,  
Where grape and apple their good name  
belie—

Will give you proof on this wise : take you  
down

Close-textured baskets from the chimney smoke,  
And wine-press strainers ; these are trodden full  
Of pure spring water and the vicious field : 290  
The water, you shall see, will all escape

In big drops through the withy mesh ; its taste  
Gives no uncertain sign, for bitterness  
Will twist to sorrow mouths that smiled before.  
Fat land on this wise briefly we divine :  
When tossed from hand to hand it never cracks,  
But pitch-like to the fingers clingingly  
Grows soft. A moist land makes the herbage  
    tall,  
And is itself inordinately rich.  
Ah ! save me from that grossly liberal field, 300  
So prone to overfeed the stripling ear !  
Heavy soil needs no speech to tell its tale,  
Neither does light. Black and each several hue  
Promptly confess their nature to the eye.  
But wicked cold is harder to detect :  
Only pitch-pines and noxious yews—sometimes  
Black ivy too—reveal its dark abode.

When all these things are well bethought, take  
    care  
To bake the earth right soon ; first intersect  
The massy hills with trenches, first expose 310  
The upturned ridges to the north, before  
You plant the gladsome vine. A crumbling soil  
Is best of all ; the wind and cutting frost  
And stalwart spadesman lifting right and left  
The loosened acres, will effect you this.  
Those men who never close precaution's eye.

First, for the training of the unwedded vines,  
 Seek out a spot like that wherein they hope  
 Later to plant them out, lest the young crop  
 Suddenly should not own its mother new. 320  
 Nay more, they note the province of the sky  
 Upon the bark, that as each stood before,  
 Fronting the southern heat or frigid pole,  
 So may it stand again. Such influence  
 Has habit on the young. But first inquire :  
 Will hill or level better suit your vine ?  
 If flat and loamy be your tilth, plant thick ;  
 You shall not thereby thin the wine-god's gift.  
 But if your farm is laid in steeps and slopes,  
 Be free with space, and none the less take care 330  
 That when the trees are set, line, path, and fence  
 Shall be exactly true. As in dread war,  
 When the long legion rolls its column out  
 In battle order on the open plain,  
 And countless ripples from the marshalled lines  
 Illume the earth with twinkling sheen of bronze,  
 Nor yet begins the fierce turmoil, but Mars  
 Uncertain wanders in the interspace :  
 Line upon line let all your parallels  
 Be true and equal ; not for this alone, 340  
 To feed the vacant fancy with the view,  
 But because on no other terms will earth  
 Dispense impartial strength, nor otherwise  
 Will growing boughs have licence to expand.



And would you learn of me the depth of  
trench?

Myself would fear not to entrust my vines  
To shallow furrows. But the guardian tree  
Is deeper buried in the dark earth's womb;  
The æsculus chiefest, for how far its top  
Stretches to heav'n, so far its roots extend 350  
To Tartarus beneath. Therefore no storm,  
No wind or swollen rain, shall rend it thence:  
Stablished it is, and as the years roll on  
Sees many a son and grandson pass away,  
And moves not yet; on this side and on that  
Its brawny arms are spread, and from the midst  
Itself sustains a firmament of shade.

Let not your vineyards face the setting sun;  
And plant no hazel 'mid the vines, nor choose  
The topmost switches, or from highest tree 360  
Break shoots; so closely do they love the  
ground;  
Wound not with blunted knife the nursling  
vines,  
Nor mix with them the woodland olive trunks:  
For often to the unwary shepherd fire  
Breaks forth, and lurking secretly at first  
Beneath the unctuous bark, soon grasps the  
bole,  
And climbing thence into the upper leaves

Roars mightily to heaven, and running on  
Through bough and tree-top holds victorious  
sway.

The whole wood wallows in the flame; black  
clouds 370

Roll up in pitchy volumes to the sky.  
But chiefly, if a storm upon the wood  
Swoops, and the wind drives on the gathered  
fire.

When this befalls, recuperative power  
Is gone: the knife is used, but nothing green  
Can mother earth recall. Wild olive-trees  
With bitter leaves do barrenly survive.

Obey no silly sage who bids you move  
A country stiffened by the North wind's breath.  
For then froze winter seals the land: your  
plants 380

Are set; he suffers not the frozen root  
To make its hold. The seed-time of the vine  
Is when the long snake's enemy arrives,  
White bird of rosy spring; or at first chill  
Of autumn, when the hot team of the sun  
Has reached not winter but run summer through.  
Spring showers her leafy blessings on the trees,  
Spring clothes the woods; in spring the swelling  
earth

Demands the seed of life. Then Father Air

With fruitful rains omnipotent descends 390  
 Upon the bosom of his smiling bride,  
 And with her greatness mingling greatly feeds  
 Her teeming womb. Then pathless brakes  
 resound

With birds in full song ; cattle seek their kind  
 On certain days ; the gravid earth brings forth,  
 And to warm Zephyr fields unbind their  
 breasts ;

The gentle moisture freely flows ; young plants  
 Kiss the new suns unshrinking, nor do vines  
 Fear rising South winds or a flood of rain  
 Driven by the mighty North, but carelessly 400  
 Put forth their buds and let each leaf expand.

Thus dawned, I trow, the birthday of the  
 world,

And kept its even way. That time was spring ;  
 In spring the huge earth rioted ; East winds  
 Withheld their wintry blasts, when the first  
 beasts

Drank in the light, and man, an iron race,  
 First reared his head from out the stony fields,  
 When God first peopled woods with savage  
 beasts,

And gemmed the sky with stars. Nor otherwise  
 Could infant Nature bear her travail now, 410  
 Were not so great tranquillity vouchsafed

Between the heat and cold, what time the earth  
Duly enfolds new graces from above.

Now list: whate'er the seedlings that ye  
plant,  
Scatter rich dung and unforgetful heap  
Much mould upon them, or with them inter  
Rough shells or stones of porous sort, for so  
The rains will creep between and subtle air  
Will penetrate, and fill their hearts with joy.  
There are who load the surface with a stone 420  
Or sherd of vasty weight; these are a shield  
Against intemperate rains, or when the heat  
Of Sirius makes the meadows gape with thirst.

When all is safely planted, it remains  
To draw the earth about the roots, and ply  
Stern hoes; or deeply drive the frequent plough,  
And e'en through vineyards guide the straining  
steer.

Then must you furnish shafts of barkless wand,  
Smooth reeds and ashen poles and stalwart  
forks,

That the young plant, relying on their  
strength, 430

May rise to mock the winds, and, climbing  
higher,

Attain the topmost storey of the elm.

And while sweet childhood's bloom is on the  
 leaves,  
 Spare yet their tenderness; while the vine-spray  
 Leaps blithely into foamless seas of air  
 Unbridled, unrestrained, no pruner's blade  
 May violate the vine; only the leaves  
 Must with bent finger-tips be nicely thinned.  
 But when with stronger stem they clasp the  
 elms,  
 And skyward plunge, then clip their leafy  
 locks, 440  
 Then lop their errant limbs: from touch of steel  
 They shrank before, but play the tyrant now  
 And sternly check the extravagance of boughs.

Next plait your fences, and let every flock  
 Be kept in bounds, most chiefly when the leaf  
 Is in its untried nonage, for beside  
 Fierce winter's storms and scorching summer's  
 eye,  
 Wild cows and pestilent roes unceasingly  
 Make sport, and sheep and greedy heifers browse.  
 No strangle-grip of hoary cold, no heat 450  
 Of summer's heavy hand on dewless rocks,  
 Will mar the leaf as they, whose venomous bite  
 Scars deadly signatures on nibbled stems.  
 'Tis for no other fault that everywhere  
 The goat is slaughtered to the god of wine:

For this the old plays step upon the stage,  
 For this at cross-roads and on village greens  
 The sons of Theseus set a prize of wit,  
 And, joying in their cups, through the soft meads  
 Dance on greased wine-skins: yea, Ausonian  
     swains, 460

Troy's children, rollick in the unlettered muse  
 And laughter uncontrolled, and take them masks  
 Of frightful mien from strips of hollowed bark,  
 And hail thee, Bacchus, in their jocund songs,  
 Whose waxen puppets dangle from the pine.  
 From thee, their spring, all vineyards flow anew  
 With juicy wealth; deep glades and echoing  
     vales

And all whereon thy comely face has shined,  
 Conceive and bear. Then duly will we praise  
 Bacchus, with proper hymn and native lay, 470  
 And bring him cakes and flesh. Led by the  
     horn,

At altar-step the doomèd goat shall stand,  
 While entrail-fatness smokes on hazel-spits.

And then the vine that other task requires  
 Which knows no end or fullness: every year  
 Twice or three times the soil is cleft, and hoes  
 With head reversed for ever smash the clod,  
 And all the trees are lightened of their leaves.  
 The farmer knows his rolling round of toil,

And each year sees its remeant self again. 480  
 When the last lingering leaf has left the vine,  
 And chill North robbed the woodlands of their  
 pride,

Then the keen swain into the coming year  
 Stretches his business, and continually  
 With Saturn's hook vexes the wastrel vine,  
 And shapes it in the pruning. Be the first  
 To delve the ground, be first to cart and burn  
 The prunings, and be first to house the poles ;  
 To gather in be last. Twice in the year  
 The shade assails the vine, twice weed and  
 briar 490

O'errun and choke it : both will give you toil :  
 Then praise a large, but till a small demesne.  
 Beside, in woods rough wands of butcher-broom,  
 And on the banks the river-reed, are cut,  
 And undressed withy beds demand your hand.  
 Now vines are tied, trees lay the sickle by,  
 And now the latest vine-dresser has sung  
 His rows completed ; none the less the earth  
 Must slumber not ; now stir the drowsy dust,  
 And tell ripe bunches to beware of rain. 500

But olives need no culture, nor desire  
 The moonèd sickle and the clinging rake,  
 When once firm-rooted they have stood the  
 breeze.

The earth herself with curvèd fang exposed  
 Affords them moisture, and at plough's desire  
 A load of fruitage; therefore with the plough  
 Rear olives plump and pleasing unto Peace.

And fruit-trees too, when once they feel their  
 strength

And solid trunk's stability, shoot up  
 Of their own power to starland, and require 510  
 No help of ours. Meantime through all the  
 grove

Reign pregnancy and birth: the wild bird-homes  
 Are red with berries, clover-fields are shorn,  
 The high wood yields the pine-wood brand, and  
 fires

Draw nourishment and shed their nightly glow.  
 And do men doubt to plant and lavish toil?  
 I need no loftier theme than lowly broom  
 And willows. These give frondage to the sheep  
 Or shade to shepherds, fences for the crops  
 And fodder for the honey-bee. Behold 520  
 Cytorus all a waving sea of box,  
 Pitch-groves of the Narycian pine, and fields  
 That knew no hoes nor any care of man.  
 Even the bare woods on Caucasian heights,  
 That savage East winds ever lash and dash,  
 Yield divers products; pine for ship-builders,  
 Cedar and cypress for the architect.



Hence farmers get the cart-wheel's smoothened  
spoke,

And drum-wheels for the wagons ; hence the ship  
Receives her archèd hull. Willows are rich 530

In supple wands, elms prodigal in leaves ;

But myrtles and the cornel, warrior-tree,

Give sturdy spear-shafts ; and the bended yew

Makes Ityræan bows ; smooth linden-trees

And lathe-turned box-wood likewise take their  
form,

By keen blade hollowed ; yea, and alders light  
Speed down the roaring torrent of the Po ;

And bees are known to hide their clustered  
swarms

In rotten holm-oak's hollow bark and bole.

Hath any gift of Bacchus proved so rich ? 540

Bacchus has sown the cause of crime : 'twas he

That tamed the frenzied Centaurs unto death,

Rhoetus and Pholus, and Hylæus strong

Scaring the Lapithæ with brandished bowl.

O farmers all too blest, could they but know  
The blessings that are theirs, for whom Earth  
pours

From her own breast an easy sustenance,

Remote from war's mellay, most righteous

Earth !

No portals proud of lofty palaces

Pour from each room long waves of morning  
 guests, 550

None gape at dædal door-posts tortoise-decked,  
 And raiment shot with frivolous gold, and bronze,  
 The pride of Corinth; white wool is not stained  
 With poisons of Assyria, nor oil

Yields its pure service to the cassia's wiles.

But careless peace and life that knows no guile,  
 Profuse in divers wealth, broad lands and ease,  
 Grottoes and living lakes, Tempe's cool vales,  
 Lulled by the low of kine soft slumber sweet  
 Beneath a tree, glades and the haunts of  
 beasts, 560

All these they have. Youth tolerant of toil  
 And faring humbly, reverence for age,  
 Gods had in honour, these their portion are.  
 When Justice fled this world of wickedness,  
 'Twas in their midst that her last steps were  
 seen.

Now be my chiefest prayer that the sweet  
 Maids

Whose priest I am, and whom I greatly love,  
 The Muses, may receive me and instruct  
 In all the ways of heaven and the stars,  
 The sun's eclipses and the travailings 570  
 That vex the moon; what makes the earth to  
 shake,

What power persuades the mighty sea to swell,  
Break bounds and refluent on himself recoil ;  
Whence is that eagerness of winter suns  
To plunge in ocean, whence the long delay  
That binds the winter nights. But if the blood  
Run cold about my heart, nor suffer me  
To touch these mysteries of Nature's realm,  
Green fields and stream-fed valleys be my joy,  
Rivers and woodlands be my humble love. 580  
O for the plains, Spercheüs and the mount  
That bears the revellings of Spartan maids,  
Taygetus ! O for cool Hæmian dells !  
Leave me there canopied with endless shade.

Happy was he whose wit availed to grasp  
The origin of things, who trampled low  
The thronging horrors of unpitying death  
And roarings of unsated Acheron !  
Blest too is he who knows the rural gods, 589  
Pan and grey-haired Silvanus and the Nymphs,  
Sweet sisters ! He regards no lictor's rod ;  
No royal robes distract his gaze, no strife  
That rends unbrothered brothers, no descent  
Of Dacian hordes from privy Danube's flood,  
Nor Rome's own turmoil and the doom that  
broods  
O'er other kingdoms ; never pitied he  
Him that hath not, nor envied him that hath.

What fruits the branches, what the willing earth,  
 Freely afford, he gathers, nor beholds  
 State archives, ruthless laws and city broils. 600  
 Others may vex the treacherous firth with oars  
 And rush upon the sword ; through palaces  
 And courts of kings their headlong course they  
 hold.

One blasts with ruin town and hapless home,  
 Lusting to quaff the jewelled cup and sleep  
 On Sarra's<sup>1</sup> purple dyes ; another hoards  
 And gloats o'er buried gold. While these are  
 rapt

With wonder at the tribune's flow of words,  
 Those gape and stare at peers and populace,  
 Rolling their frequent plaudits through the  
 rows 610

Not once nor twice. Some wade through  
 brothers' blood,  
 And with a laugh change all the sweets of home  
 For exile kingdoms 'neath an alien sky.

Meantime the husbandman with crooked  
 plough  
 Has cleft the earth : hence labour's yearly meed,  
 Hence feeds he fatherland and grandchild small,  
 Hence are milch-cow and honest steer main-  
 tained.

<sup>1</sup> Tyre.

Earth never rests : either with fruit she flows,  
Or with young lambs, or with the wheaten sheaf  
Beloved of Ceres : increase loads the drills 620  
And barns are overcome. Now winter's here,  
And Sicyon's berry makes the oil-press move,  
The swine plod homeward acorn-sleek, the woods  
Yield arbutes : many-fruited Autumn lays  
Her produce down ; on sunny rocks o'erhead  
The vintage mellows to the ripening sun.  
His darling children cling and kiss the while,  
His chaste home keeps its purity, the cows  
Drag udders deep, and in the meadows lush  
Kids fat and bonny wrestle horn to horn. 630  
The husbandman himself keeps holiday,  
And on the greensward, round the altar fire,  
Pours wine and hails thee, wine-press god ; the  
while  
His comrades wreath the bowl. Then on the  
elm  
He sets a mark, whereat with wingèd dart  
His shepherds vie, and for the wrestling match  
The rustic bares his horny nerve and threw.  
Such was the life the Sabines lived of yore,  
Such Remus and his twin ; 'twas this, in sooth,  
That made Etruria strong, and Rome herself 640  
The fairest thing the world has ever seen,  
Seven hills enfolded in one city wall.  
Before the sceptred sway of Dicte's Jove,



BOOK III  
OF BEASTS





## BOOK III

### OF BEASTS

THEE too, great Pales, and thee, shepherd-god  
Amphrysus-famed, and all the woods and  
streams

Belovèd of Lycæus will I sing.

All themes that else had laid the charm of song  
On empty minds are worn : who does not know

The altars of Busiris the unblest,

And stern Eurystheus? Every bard has told

Of youthful Hylas and of Leto's isle,

Of ivory-shouldered Pelops, charioteer, 9

And Hippodame. Some path must be essayed

Whereby I too may lift me from the ground

And drink Fame's nectar from the lips of men.

I first, if life be granted me enough,

Will lure the muses from Aonia's hill

And lead them home with me. I first will bring

The palms of Edom, Mantua, for thee,

And on the green lawn, river-bordered, build

A marble fane, where tirèd Mincio curls

His broader wanderings fringed with swaying

reed.

Cæsar shall stand in midmost shrine, my god. 20  
For him will I assume the victor's robe,  
And, bright with Tyrian purple, by the stream  
Will drive a hundred four-horse cars. All Greece  
Shall leave Alpheüs and the Nemean grove,  
And at my bidding strive with speed of foot  
And cruel boxing-glove. Myself, arrayed  
In crown of olive leafage, will bring gifts.  
E'en now I joy to shed the blood of bulls,  
And shrineward lead the solemn pomp, or see  
How stage-fronts part and don another face, 30  
And purple curtains raise the inwoven Celt.  
Upon the doors an Indian battle-scene  
Is wrought of solid ivory and gold,  
With conquering Quirinus and the Nile  
Heaving with waves of war and flowing big,  
And columns haughty with the bronze of ships.  
By them shall stand proud Asia's cities tamed,  
Niphates beaten back, and bended bows  
Of craven Parthian turning in mid-flight,  
And trophies twain, the spoils of diverse foes, 40  
And triumphs won on either side the sea.  
There Parian stones shall live and breathe as  
men,  
Assaracus his seed, and the great race  
Of heavenly origin, forefather Tros,  
And Phœbus sire of Troy. There rueful Spite  
Shall quake at Furies, and the heartless stream

Cocytus, and Ixion's tangled snakes,  
The monster wheel and ever-thwarting stone.

Meantime the innocence of wood and glen  
All Dryad-haunted, at thy stern command, 50  
Mæccnas, be my quest. Without thine aid  
The mind conceives no lofty thought : arise  
And tarry not ; Cithæron's loud halloo  
Calls thee, Taygetus his hounds give tongue,  
Horse-schooling Epidaurus cheers, the woods  
Join voice and bellow back the louder sound.  
But soon I fain would gird myself and sing  
Of Cæsar's burning wars, and give his name  
As many years of glory as have passed  
Since first Tithonus gat the royal line. 60

Whoso aspires to win Olympian palms  
With horse and car ; whoso would have his kine  
Strong to the plough, let him give special heed  
To choice of dams : a cow of savage mien  
And coarse head on a massive neck is best,  
With dewlap drooping right from throat to knee.  
Her length of body cannot be too great,  
Her scale is grand, her very foot is big,  
And 'neath her moonèd horns are shaggy ears.  
I would not spurn a mottle-white, or one 70  
Shy of the yoke and mettlesome of horn,  
Bull-like of visage, tall from end to end,

With tail that sweeps her footsteps when she  
moves.

Of timely wedlock and Lucina's toil  
The fifth year is the first, the tenth the last ;  
The rest give neither fitness for the stud,  
Nor strength for ploughing : meantime loose the  
males

While rampant youth is rife among the herds ;  
Be first to trust to Love's sweet bond your kine,  
Cross strain with strain and keep the breed  
alive. 80

The fairest morns are swiftest to decay  
For wretched mortals : melancholy age,  
Toil, trouble and diseases follow soon,  
And tyrant death snatches with pitiless hand.  
Some you will aye be fain to change for other ;  
Then keep renewing ; resupply each place  
Before 'tis empty—thus you shall not lose—  
And choose the herd's successors every year.

The horse requires the same selective care.  
On those to which you trust the stud's renown, 90  
Straight from the teat bestow your chiefest pains.  
A colt of noble lineage from the first  
Steps higher in the paddock and puts down  
A lighter foot ; he leads the way abroad,  
Foremost he dares the threatening stream, fore-  
most

He treads the untried bridge, nor starts aside  
At harmless sounds. His head is carried high  
And finely drawn, his back is full of beef,  
His barrel short, and o'er his fiery chest  
A wealth of muscle plays. (Blue roans and  
bays 100  
Are good ; the worst of all are whites and duns.)  
Then, if he hear a distant din of arms,  
He cannot rest, his ears this way and that  
He turns, and snorting, with each limb a-shake,  
Beneath his nostrils rolls the gathered fire.  
His bushy mane he tosses to the off,  
A double backbone runs between his loins,  
And with firm hoof of heavy-sounding horn  
He paws the earth. Of such was Cyllarus,  
Whose bridle Amyclæan Pollux ruled, 110  
Of such were those that live in Grecian song,  
The pairs of great Achilles and of Mars.  
Yea, such was Saturn's self, when, at the approach  
Of Ops, about his equine neck he shed  
His hasty mane, and, neighing as he fled,  
Filled lofty Pelion with the shrilly sound.

Yet e'en so good a steed, when slow with years  
Or worn with wasting sickness, keep at home,  
Nor grant indulgence to his praiseless age.  
The stallion waxes cold with years ; in vain 120  
He tries the ungrateful task ; if to the fight

He ever comes : as, impotently strong,  
 A fire devours the stubbles, so he raves  
 Fruitlessly. Therefore shall you chiefly care  
 For youth and mettle : manners should come  
 next,

And pedigree, and how each bears defeat  
 Or glories in the palm. Now see you not  
 How when the cars have leaped from prison  
 forth,

And gripped the plain in headlong rivalry, 129  
 The young men's hopes are high ; strong ecstasy  
 Exhausts their throbbing hearts ; with whirling  
 lash

They urge the mares and, leaning, give them rein,  
 While flying axles are aglow with speed ?  
 Now on the ground they run, now borne aloft  
 They tread the air and rise upon the wind ;  
 Nor tarry they nor rest ; the tawny sand  
 Rises in cloud, and each is wet with foam  
 And breath of his pursuer, so intense  
 Their love of praise, so much they lust to win.

'Twas Erichthonius first made bold to yoke 140  
 Four steeds and stand on winning wheels at  
 speed.

Pelethron's Lapithæ gave men the bit  
 And riding in a ring astride : 'twas they  
 Who taught the panoplied dragoon to prance

And place his lofty steps. Each work is hard ;  
For each the breeder's quest is youth and fire  
And keenness for the course, though that old  
steed

Have often pressed the routed enemy,  
And name Epirus as his nursing-sire,  
Or brave Mycenæ ; nay, although he claim 150  
Neptune the proven founder of his line.

These wishes won, men stir themselves betimes,  
And lavish care to plump with solid flesh  
The chosen chief and husband of the herd.  
Sweet-flow'ring grass they cut, and living streams  
And corn they bring, lest to his pleasing toil  
He prove unequal, and his weedy sons  
Reflect the leanness of their pauper sire.  
The mares themselves they stint and keep them  
low

With purpose : when the wonted love begins 160  
To crave sweet intercourse, no leafy shade  
Nor water-springs do they allow them now.  
And oft they shake and tire them galloping  
Beneath the fiery sun, when threshing-floors  
Groan 'neath the heavily-pounded corn, and  
when

The tossed chaff floats on rising wings of West.  
All this they do lest the conceptive field  
Be dulled with surfeit and its furrows clogged

With idle fat, nor rather eagerly  
Reach for the seed and store it deep within. 170

And now the care of sires begins to wane  
Before the claims of mothers. When they roam  
Heavy in foal and near their time, let none  
Permit them then to bear the wagon-yoke  
And draw a heavy load, or leap a lane,  
And scour the fields in ecstasy of speed,  
And breast the thrusting current of the stream.  
In empty glades and by full-flowing brooks  
They browse, where moss abounds and grassy  
banks 179  
Are greenest, where the cave may shelter them  
And jutting brows o'erspread their rocky shade.

Around the groves of Silarus and the mount  
Alburnus, green with holm-oaks, swarms a fly:  
Asilus is its Roman name, to Greeks  
It is the Oestrus: most unmusical  
And harsh it buzzes—lo! the frightened herds  
Fly helter-skelter through the woods, the sky  
Is mad with bellowings, Tanager's dry bed  
And all the forest shudders at the sound.  
This fearful monster Juno used of old 190  
For horrid vengeance and designèd scourge  
Upon the Inachian heifer. Mark it well—  
'Tis more ferocious in the noon-day heat—



And ward it from the pregnant cows : feed them  
At sunrise or when stars lead in the night.

The calving done, your care is all transferred  
To the young entry : promptly do men brand  
The symbols of their race, and mark them out,  
These to be reared for increase of the herd,  
Those consecrate to altar-rites, and those 200  
To cleave the earth and break the hummocked  
plain

His upturned clods. The residue are fed  
In pastures green. But those that you would  
mould

Unto the use and business of the farm,  
Urge them in calfhood, start upon the road  
Of subjugation in the plastic age,  
Ere young desire has hardened into will.  
First twine beneath their throats loose necklaces  
Of slender willow ; then, soon as their necks  
Confess to servitude, unite a pair 210  
By these same collars, and compel the twain  
To step in unison ; and often now  
Let them be hitched to unencumbered wheels,  
Whose burthen lightly marks the topmost dust ;  
But soon let beechen axles creak and groan  
Under a serious weight, with brazen pole  
And body all complete. Meantime mere grass,  
And slender willow-leaves and marshland sedge

Will not suffice the raw young calves : for them  
 Your hand shall gather springing corn as  
     well ; 220

Nor, as our fathers did, shall you allow  
 The nursing dams to fill the snowy pail ;  
 Nay ! give their pretty sons an udder-full.

But if to war and bloody tournaments  
 Ambition leads you ; if to glide on wheels  
 Past Pisa's stream, Alpheüs, and to urge  
 In Jove's own wood the wingèd chariot :  
 The steed's first duty is to look unmoved  
 On arms and doughty knights, and to endure  
 The cornet and the whirr of travelling wheels,  
 And in the stable hear the rattled bits. 231  
 Then let him learn to revel more and more  
 In pleasant flattery and the sounding clap  
 Of master's hand upon his handsome neck.

This he should dare as soon as ever weaned,  
 And oft in season grant his tender nose  
 To the soft halter, ere his strength is formed,  
 And yet in trembling innocence of life.  
 But when, three summers done, the fourth  
     begins, 239  
 Longe him at speed, and let him learn to time  
 His steps in consonance, let hock and knee  
 Be flexed in graceful order, and the scene

Be one of effort under governance.

Then he may call the winds to match his speed,  
And scour the open seeming bridle-free,  
And scarcely skim with flying hoof the sand :  
As when the North wind swoops with gathered  
    might

From Hyperborean shores, and drives apart  
The dry cloud-mountains and the Scythian  
    storms ;

Then the deep corn-fields and the seedless  
    main 250

A soft breath ruffles, and a tree-top wail  
Sways through the woods, and lengthening  
    rollers press

Toward the land ; while on he flies, and sweeps  
Meadow and main together in his flight.

And now at Elis on the spreading plain  
Your steed shall sweat to victory, and the foam  
Fly bloody from his jaws ; unless he bear  
A Belgian carriage on his gentle neck  
More aptly. Now you have him tamed, and now  
Let his stout belly swell with rich com-  
    pounds. 260

But tame him first, for else his haughty soul  
Outgrows him, and when caught he scorns to  
    brook

The whirling lash or heed the wolf-bit's fang.

No careful toil is such a stay of strength  
 As to repel the goads of blinding love,  
 Whether in horses or in kine you choose  
 To find your joy. And therefore is the bull  
 Banished to lonely pastures far away,  
 Behind tall mountains and across wide streams ;  
 Or else kept close in paddocks full of grass. 270  
 For his fair lady withers all his strength,  
 And burns him with her glamour, nor allows  
 Visions of leaf or herb to haunt his mind,  
 Sweet charmer that she is, and oft constrains  
 Her lovers proud to try a joust of horns.  
 In Sila's deeps a beauteous heifer feeds :  
 Her suitors ply thick interchange of blows  
 Right furiously ; black blood drenches their  
     sides ;  
 Horn fronting horn they lean and thrust ; deeply  
 They roar, and woods and welkin wide resound.  
 Nor will the rivals share a home ; the one 281  
 Beaten departs, and leads an exile's life  
 On unknown shores afar, with many a groan  
 For honour in the dust and blows received  
 From his proud conqueror, loves lost beside  
 All unavenged. Thus, looking long behind,  
 The monarch quits his patrimonial realms.  
 Most strictly then he practises his strength,  
 And 'mid hard rocks upon a couch unstrorn 289  
 Lies all the night long, pastured on rough leaves

And sharp-edged rushes ; then he proves himself,  
And learns to mass his rage in lowered horns,  
Goring a tree-trunk, butting at the winds,  
And tossing sand in mimicry of war.  
Then with regenerate might and nerves restrung  
He rears his standard, and unheralded  
Bears madly on the foe ; like as a wave  
Begins to whiten on the open sea  
Far off, and draws its bosom from the deep,  
And rolling landward makes a thunderous roar  
Among the rocks, nor falls in lesser mass 301  
Than would the cliff itself ; the under-deep  
Whirls hotly up and heaves the dark sand high.

All things terrestrial, whether man or brute,  
The ocean tribes, tame beasts, gay-feathered  
birds,  
Rush on to passion's pyre. Love rules them all,  
The same love ; never fiercer prowls abroad  
The lioness, forgetful of her whelps,  
Nor uncouth bears deal death so wantonly 309  
And bloodshed through the forest ; fiercest then  
Are boars, the tigress at her worst ; ah ! then  
'Tis ill to stray through Libya's lonely wastes !  
Mark how the stallion shakes from stem to  
stern  
If he but catch the wind he knows so well.  
No man with bit or cruel lash, no rocks

Nor beetling crags, no rivers in his path  
 Delay him now, though mountains helplessly  
 Hurtle adown their flood. Lo! forth he comes,  
 The boar of Samnium, and whets his tusks,  
 And ploughs the earth before him with his  
     hoof, 320

And rubs against a tree-trunk; up and down  
 He hardens both his shoulders to the wounds.  
 How fared the youth whose deeply-aching bones  
 Unswerving love enflamed? In blind midnight  
 He swims the strait distraught with violent  
     squalls;

Over him booms the mighty mouth of heaven,  
 And surf-lashed boulders roar anxiety;  
 Though weeping parents call him back, and  
     though

A hapless maid shall blend her death with his,  
 He comes not. What of Bacchus' dappled  
     lynx? 330

What of the bold society of wolves  
 And dogs? What battles wage the peaceful  
     stags?

In sooth the rage of mares transcendeth all:  
 Venus herself inspired them, when of old  
 The Potniad team champed Glaucus' mangled  
     limbs.

Love leads them over Gargara and o'er  
 Ascanius, vocal stream; mountains are climbed

And rivers swum. Soon as the flame is set  
Beneath their passionate hearts—most oft in  
spring,  
Because in spring new heat is in their  
bones— 340  
They lift their faces to the Western gale,  
And stand on high rocks quaffing the light air ;  
And oft, unknown by stallion—wondrous truth—  
But heavy with the wind, o'er crag and fell,  
And down through bosomed valley-deeps they  
run ;  
On, on, not to the cradle of the Dawn,  
But Boreas<sup>1</sup> and Caurus,<sup>2</sup> or the land  
Whence Auster's<sup>3</sup> blackness looms into the day  
And mars the face of Heaven with icy tears.  
And now the Horse-rage, properly so named 350  
By swains, sheds viscid moisture from the groin ;  
The Horse-rage sought of wicked stepmothers,  
Who mingle herbs and prophecies of ill.

But time flies on, irrevocable time,  
While we with love-lit eyes divert our course  
To gaze on each delight. Hence, steed and steer!  
The half of duty yet remains, to urge  
The fleecy flock and shaggy nanny-goats.  
Here is your scope, ye hearty husbandmen,

<sup>1</sup> The North wind.

<sup>2</sup> The North-West wind.

<sup>3</sup> The South wind.

Here rests your hope of praise. And well I  
 know 360

How hard it is to make mere words avail  
 To broaden out so strait a theme in song.  
 But sweet love lifts me o'er the lonely heights  
 Parnassian; o'er the cliffs I joy to wend,  
 Whence no worn pathway softly lies adown  
 The sward that wanders to Castalia.

Now, noble Pales, swell the louder strain.  
 First I ordain that sheep have herbage green  
 In comfortable folds, while summer's leaf  
 Is yet returning, and the frozen ground 370  
 Be strewn with plenteous straw and sheaves of  
 fern,  
 Lest chilly ice afflict the delicate flock,  
 And burden them with scab and foot-rot foul.  
 Then these I leave and bid supply the goats  
 With leafy arbute and with living stream,  
 Also that cots shall face the winter sun,  
 Averse from winds to noon-day, at the time  
 When cold Aquarius dies his rainy death  
 Upon the utmost year. Nor do the goats  
 Deserve less care from man, for equally 380  
 Will they repay us, though high bidders buy  
 Milesian fleeces seethed in Tyrian reds:  
 They drop more young, their yield of milk is  
 grand;



The higher drainèd udders froth the pail,  
So much more freely do the rivers flow  
When teats are pressed again. And, furthermore,  
Cinyphian goats are shorn of grizzled beards  
And bosky bristles for campaigners' use,  
And eke to clothe poor sailors on the sea.  
Woods and Lycæan heights their pasture are, 390  
The prickly briar and the mountain thorn  
Their food ; the nightly fold unsought they seek,  
With little ones at heel, and laden udders  
Trailing across the threshold. Then be sure—  
Since they so seldom ask the help of man—  
To keep the ice and snowy winds away,  
And bring them stuff and bushy nutriment  
Ungrudgingly, nor keep the hay-loft closed  
All through the winter. But when zephyrs call,  
And smiling summer orders either flock 400  
To glade and mead, what time the Morning star  
First peeps, let us enjoy the cool champaign,  
While morn is young and meadows hoary-tressed,  
And flocks suck dew from every luscious blade.  
Then, soon as heaven's fourth hour has gathered  
thirst

And sing-song crickets through the bushes swell  
Their noisy plaints, at wells and ponds profound  
The flocks from holm-oak conduits shall imbibe  
The running water. But in hottest day  
To some umbrageous dell shall they retire, 410

Where Jove's great oak, a thousand summers  
 strong,  
 Spreads out his mighty arms, or where the grove,  
 Blackened by many a holm-oak, watches o'er  
 With holy shade. Then you shall give again  
 Pellucid founts and feed till setting sun,  
 When cooler evening tones the air, and glades  
 Grow dewy-fresh beneath the rising moon,  
 And halcyon hymns make shores melodious,  
 And copses sweeten with the blackcap's song.

Of Libyan sheep and shepherd need I tell, 420  
 And camps with only here and there a roof?  
 Oft day and night and all the whole month  
 through  
 The flock is grazing into league on league  
 Of wilderness, nor knows a dwelling; far  
 The long plain lies. His chattels and his goods  
 The Libyan neatherd carries, hearth and home  
 And weapons, Cretan quiver, Spartan hound:  
 As the stout Roman in his country's cause  
 Beneath the tyrannous baggage presses on,  
 And long ere foe announced has pitched his  
 tent 430  
 And stands in column ready to deploy.

Quite different 'tis where Scythian tribes are  
 found,

And waves Mæotian and the Danube's stream  
Rolling the golden sand in angry swirls,  
And where returning Rhodope points straight  
For middle North. There herds are always  
stalled,

And ne'er a herb is seen upon the plain,  
Nor leaves upon a tree, but everywhere  
Behold the landscape masked in monster drifts  
And ice so deep, seven cubits high they tower. 440

'Tis winter always, and the North-West winds  
Are ever breathing cold. There, too, the sun  
Never dispels at all the ghostly gloom,

Nor riding up to highest heaven, nor when  
In River Ocean's roseate flood he laves

His swooping car. Upon the rapid stream  
Lo! sudden films are forming, and the wave  
Supports the iron tire upon its back ;

Hostess of ships before, it entertains  
Broad wagons now. Bronze vessels daily  
split, 450

Clothes harden on the body, liquid wine  
Is chopped with hatchets, and whole ponds at  
once

Become a block of ice, and icicles  
Stand stiff and awkward on the uncombed beard.  
Meantime the air is blind with falling flakes :  
Sheep die, the ox's bulky carcass stands  
Embedded in the snow, the huddled stags

Are paralysed beneath the unusual mass,  
 And e'en their topmost tines are hardly seen.  
 These with no questing tufters<sup>1</sup> nor with nets 460  
 Or purple feather-scare do men assail,  
 But, as with futile breast they strain against  
 The stubborn mountain, knife them with the  
     hand,  
 Silencing their deep cries, and bear them home  
 With boisterous mirth. Themselves have peace  
     and ease

In deep-dug subterranean lairs, and roll  
 Great stacks of oak-logs and elm-trunks entire  
 Upon the blazing hearths. And here with  
     games  
 They lead the night-hours, well content to quaff  
 Beer and rough cider, counting them for wine. 470  
 Such are the Northmen 'neath the sevenfold  
     Bear,  
 A wild ungoverned people, buffeted  
 By the Rhipæan East, whose limbs are swathed  
 In tawny hairiness of cattle-hides.

If wool be your desire, then thorny brakes,  
 Clivers and caltrops must be done away.  
 Avoid rich pasture, too, and straight select  
 White flocks with downy fleeces. But the ram,  
 How white soe'er his person, if there lurk

<sup>1</sup> Hounds used on Exmoor to rouse a deer.

A black tongue in the moisture of his mouth, 480  
Reject him, lest he stain with dusky spots  
His children's fleeces : cast your eye around  
And take another from the well-stocked downs.  
With such a gift, a snowy fleece to wit,  
(Dare we believe it?) Pan, Arcadia's god,  
Enslaved the raptured Moon, into deep groves  
Calling her ; neither did she spurn the call.

But who loves milk will bring with careful  
hand  
Lucerne and lotus freely to the pens,  
And salted grass. This lures them to the  
streams, 490  
And makes them stretch their udders more and  
hide  
A salty savour in the milk they yield.  
And many wean the new-dropped kid at once,  
And arm its muzzle with an iron spike.  
The morning milk, the milk of orient hours,  
At night they press ; but that of setting suns  
And sombre eve the shepherd stores in cans  
And takes to town at daybreak, or 'tis touched  
With scanty salt and kept for winter use.

Let not your care of dogs be last or least, 500  
But swell with generous whey swift Sparta's  
whelp,

And fierce Molossian too. With these to watch,  
 Your fold shall fear no robber of the night,  
 Nor wolf-invasion, nor shall you look round  
 To shrink from sneaking Spaniard's restless  
 blade.

And often you shall course the timorous ass,  
 And chase with hounds the hare, with hounds  
 the doe.

With crashes of hound-music shall you force  
 The wallowing boar to leap from woodland  
 slough,

And o'er the mountains rouse a royal stag, 510  
 And with loud holloas press him to the nets.

And learn to light a scented cedar-fire  
 Among your stalls ; and scare with reek of gum  
 The loathsome water-snake. Oft 'neath some  
 fence

That long has stood, a clammy viper hides,  
 Fearing to meet the searching eye of heaven, ,  
 Or else the snake whose wont is to ascend  
 To roof-tree shadows, very curse of cows  
 And poisoner of sheep, enjoys a bed  
 Low on the ground. Now, swain, for sticks and  
 stones ; 520

And when with puff and hiss he means to strike,  
 Down him. And now his head is gone to ground  
 In abject flight, his middle straightens out,

And all the long procession of his tail  
Falls smooth, and slow his final orbits writhe.  
Mark too that most abominable snake  
Of glens Calabrian, with towering breast  
And rolling rings of scaly back behind,  
And long lean belly spotted big and clear.  
While any streams are gushing still, and  
while 530  
Lands ooze with wet of spring and rainy South,  
He haunts the pools and, lurking in the  
banks,  
Insatiate crams his hellish maw with fish  
And loud-protesting frogs. But when the marsh  
Is scorched, and fields are open-mouthed with  
heat,  
Out leaps he on the dry, and ramps abroad,  
Rolling his flame-shot eyes, wildly athirst  
And mad with heatstroke. Ne'er invite me then  
To take a restful slumber under heaven,  
Or lie grass-pillowed on a bosky ridge, 540  
When young and dapper from discarded slough  
He surges, leaving young or eggs at home,  
And in life's newness rises high in air,  
While three-forked fangs make lightning round  
his lips.

Now of diseases shalt thou also learn,  
Their causes and their symptoms. Filthy scab

Plagues the poor sheep if e'er a chilling shower  
 Or the cold shock of winter's hoary grip  
 Strikes through to living flesh, or sweat dries on  
 Unwashed after shearing; body-cuts 550  
 From barbèd brambles will induce the same.  
 Therefore do shepherds in sweet flowing streams  
 Rinse the whole flock : beneath the fall the ram  
 Is swamped, and floats all sodden down the  
 stream.

And some anoint with bitter lees of oil  
 The fleecelless body, mixing silver scum  
 And natural sulphur, pitch from Ida's pines,  
 Wax fat with oil, squill, stinking hellebore  
 And black bitumen. But no help at need  
 Is found so strong as when a man makes  
 bold 560

To lance the ulcer's crown : the mischief grows  
 And gathers life from secrecy, while swains,  
 Fearing to lay the surgeon hand to sores,  
 Sit asking Providence for better fate.  
 Nay, when the pain sinks deep into the bones,  
 And racks the bleater's marrow, when his limbs  
 Consume away with fever dry, 'tis wise  
 To quench the savage fires, and strike the vein  
 That throbs with blood atwixt the parted hoof,  
 As is the manner of Gelonian fierce 570  
 And the Bisaltæ, when they take their flight  
 To Getan deserts and to Rhodope,



And quaff milk thickened with the blood of  
mares.

If e'er you spy afar a sheep too fond  
Of sympathetic shade, or clipping high  
The charmless grasses, if she follow last,  
Or in mid-pasture drop upon the plain,  
And lone and last yield to the gathering night,  
Take knife at once and check the fault, before  
The dreadful taint creep through the heedless  
flock. 580

Not near so fiercely o'er the ocean sweep  
The racing whirlwinds when they bring the  
storm,

As throng the plagues of cattle. And they seize  
Not one, nor two, but summer-pastures whole  
Without a cry, old ewes and lambs unborn ;  
Root, branch and all they go. He knows 'tis  
true

Who sees now after such a lapse of time  
The soaring Alps, the Iapydian meads  
Through which Timavus flows, the village walls  
On Noric ridges, realms of shepherd-kings 590  
Kingless, and glades all vast with emptiness.

Here once a grievous epidemic fell  
From tainted heaven, and waxed into a blaze  
With all the heat of autumn : every tribe  
Of cattle and wild things was given to death ;

While ponds were putrid, pastures stank of filth.  
 The road to hell was various : fiery thirst  
 Coursed through the veins and shrank the  
     wretched limbs,

But then the watery tide swelled in again  
 And crumbled bone on bone into itself      600  
 Till all was liquor rotten with disease.

Oft in the midst of sacrificial rite  
 And doing on of bands of snowy wool,  
 The unslain beast 'mid waiting acolytes  
 Fell dying. Or if priestly hand ere that  
 Had slaughtered with the knife, no answering  
     flame

Shot from those filaments on altar laid,  
 The prophet, asked for rede, had none to give,  
 And knife-blades hardly reddened 'neath the  
     throat,

And sand scarce blushed with niggard splash of  
     gore.      610

In pleasant grass the calves are dying fast,  
 At laden mangers their sweet souls they yield ;  
 Madness attacks the faithful dog, and swine  
 Heave with asthmatic coughs and fight for breath  
 Through swollen throats. The champion courser  
     falls

Joyless of racing, reckless of his food ;  
 From water-springs averse he stamps the ground  
 Incessantly, his ears hang loose, and sweat

Breaks fitfully upon them, growing cold  
As death draws near; his hide is dry and  
hard, 620  
Nor yields to pressure of the kneading hand.  
These are the early signs before the end.  
But as the gathering distemper grows  
And waxes fierce, then bloodshot eyes and breath  
Deep-drawn and sometimes weighted with a  
groan ;  
Long sobs convulse the belly, from the nose  
Black blood drips and the rough tongue rasps  
against  
The obstructed throat. 'Tis time for drenching-  
horn  
And draughts of wine, the only hope that  
smiled  
On dying sufferers ; but soon this too 630  
Was turned to their destruction, and anew  
The strengthened fever raged : in death's weak  
hour—  
Heaven visit such confusion on our foes  
And serve the righteous better !—they themselves  
Tore their own limbs asunder with bare teeth.

Lo ! smoking 'neath the toilsome plough the ox  
Falls groaning out his life, while bloody foam  
Falls from his mouth. The downcast ploughman  
goes,

The yokemate, sorrowing at his brother's death,  
Is loosed, and stiff in mid-task stands the  
plough 640

No shade of lofty groves, no grassy leas  
Shall wake his soul, nay, nor the stream that rolls  
Purer than amber o'er its bouldered bed  
Unto the plain; but his deep flanks give way,  
Oblivion leans upon his waning eyes,  
And earthward sinks the dead weight of his neck  
What help are honest service now and toil?  
What profit to have turned the heavy land  
With ploughshare? Yet no Massic vineyard's  
wealth

Nor sumptuous banquets steal their strength  
away: 650

On leaves and grass, a simple fare, they feed,  
Their cups are crystal springs and leaping brooks,  
And no care breaks the soundness of their  
sleep.

Never before, men say, among those fields  
Were oxen sought in vain for Juno's rites,  
And chariots drawn unto the lofty shrines  
By ill-matched buffaloes. So human-kind  
With painful harrows score the ground: the seed  
They bury with their very finger-nails,  
And up the steep hill-sides drag creaking  
wains 660

With strainedè necks. No wolf around the fold  
Prowls thievishly, nor takes his nightly walk  
About the sleeping flocks ; a stronger care  
Subdues him ; timid does and fleeting stags  
Through hound and homestead freely wander  
now.

Now too the wide sea's offspring, and all things  
That walk his paths, are cast up by the tide,  
Stark as wrecked corpses where the breaker  
turned ;

And wondering rivers watch the seals ascend.  
Safe in his tortuous lair the viper dies, 670  
Vain stronghold ; crazed with fear the water-  
snake

Meets death with scales on end ; the very birds  
From uncongenial air stricken descend  
And leave life far above them 'neath a cloud.  
And worse—'tis idle to give other food,  
And costly cures are poison ; medicine-men  
Give up the fight, even Phillyrides  
And Amythaon's son were helpless here.  
Tisiphone the Pale comes fiercely forth  
From Stygian gloom to light of day, and  
drives 680

Disease and Dread before her ; every day  
Her ravening head looms higher o'er the land.  
With bleat and bellow of unnumbered beasts  
The rivers and dry banks and mountain-sides

Mourn. Now by rank and legion she destroys,  
And in the very stalls heaps up her slain,  
All decomposing in a loathsome mess ;  
Until men learn to bury them in pits .  
And earth them over. For the hides are waste,  
And neither fire nor water serve to purge 690  
The useless flesh, and none can shear the wool  
Riddled with exudations and disease,  
Nor touch the rotten web, if web there be ;  
Nay, if one tried to wear the filthy stuff,  
Burning pustules appeared, and rancid sweat  
Flowed down the noisome limbs, and very soon  
The awful fire consumed the infected frame.

END OF BOOK III

BOOK IV  
OF BEES





## BOOK IV

### OF BEES

Now hear the history of heaven-dropped  
honey,  
A boon divine. This portion of my theme  
Behold thou too, Mæcenas. I display  
Heroic scenes upon a puny scale,  
Great-hearted leaders and a finished frame  
Of manners, aims, and social grades, and wars.  
I work with little things, but passing great  
Is my reward, if cruel Providence  
Consents to aught and Phœbus hears a prayer.

First find a site well suited to the bees, 10  
Where ne'er a wind has access, for the winds  
Prevent the carrying of the pollen home ;  
And where no sheep nor mischief-headed kid  
Can crumple up the flowers, nor straying cow  
Shake down the dew, and crush the rising blade.  
Suffer no gaudy lizard's wrinkled back  
Within the rich demesne, nor feathered foes,  
The bee-eater and Procne,<sup>1</sup> finger-marked  
With blood upon her bosom ; these will deal

<sup>1</sup> The swallow.

Destruction everywhere, the bees themselves 20  
 They catch and bear, sweet meat for savage  
 brood.

But crystal springs and lakelets mossy-green,  
 And tiny rivers slipping through the grass—  
 Make these your own; and let a palm-tree tall,  
 Or great wild olive, shade the bees' front door;  
 That when their kings lead forth the early  
 swarms,

First-fruits of spring, and new-born from the  
 comb

Young bees are playing; then a friendly bank  
 May woo them to take refuge from the heat,  
 Or tree persuade them to enjoy its shade. 30  
 Into the middle, be the water still

Or flowing free, cast willow logs cross-wise,  
 And massy boulders, that no saving bridge  
 May fail them for the spreading of their wings  
 To summer suns, if Eurus,<sup>1</sup> as they pause,  
 Have damped or plunged them headlong in the  
 tide.

All round let cassia green and odorous thyme,  
 And realms of heavy-scented savory  
 Bloom, and sweet nurseries of violets quaff  
 The quickening fountain. But the hives them-  
 selves, 40

Whether you have them sewn of hollow bark,

<sup>1</sup> The East wind.

Or whether plaited of tough osier-wands,  
Need narrow inlet-holes : for winter's cold  
Congeals the honey, and again the heat  
Softens it all to juice. Bees have to fear  
Both powers alike, nor do they without cause  
So keenly plaster little chinks with wax  
And fill up cracks with propolis and flowers,  
And store for this same service a cement  
More holding e'en than birdlime and the pitch 50  
Of Phrygian Ida. Often too in holes  
Scooped out, so runs belief, beneath the ground  
They keep warm house, and may be found deep  
down  
In hollow rocks and cavities of trees.  
Yet give them help, smear o'er their draughty  
cribs  
A muddy coating warm and smooth, strew  
leaves  
Lightly atop ; permit no yew-tree near,  
Nor burn red crabs upon the hearth close by ;  
And 'ware the deep morass and stinking mire,  
Or place where hollow rocks alive with sound 60  
Catch shouts and send their echo bounding  
back.

Now when the golden sun has put to rout  
Winter, and chased him 'neath the earth, with  
light

Opening the summer sky, forthwith the bees  
 Range wood and glade, make boot upon gay  
 flowers,

And lightly sip the surfaces of streams.

Returning glad with some mysterious joy  
 They brood o'er grub and cell ; and cunningly  
 Are new combs wrought and clammy honey  
 formed.

So when you see them streaming forth, a  
 swarm, 70

And swimming up through summer's liquid blue  
 To starland ; when before your charmed gaze  
 Their dark host lengthens out upon the wind,  
 Watch them: they always make for leafy bowers  
 And running waters. Hither follow them  
 And sprinkle perfumes that I shew you here,  
 The waxflower's humble stalk and pounded  
 balm ;

Clash cymbals too and make your kettles ring :  
 Behold, all uncompelled they occupy  
 Their scented chamber, of their own sweet will 80  
 They dive, as ever, deep into their nest.

But if for war they issue forth—for oft  
 Tumultuous enmities possess two kings—  
 Long ere the fight you shall foreknow the host,  
 Hearts brave and beating fiercely with the joy  
 Of coming battle ; for a martial strain

Of brazen clarion hoarsely chides the slow,  
And sounds are heard that mock the broken  
voice

Of trumpets : in and out, a vibrant mass  
With wings a-spin they hasten, whetting stings 90  
Upon their beaks and bracing every thew ;  
Then round the kings' own royal palace doors  
They cluster, calling loudly for the foe.  
So when a fair spring day and cloudless field  
Have blessed them, out they come : in highest  
heaven

They rush together with a roar ; the twain  
Roll into one great ball and headlong fall.  
Not thicker pelt the hailstones from the sky,  
Not thicker rains the mast from shaken oak.  
The kings, proudwinged between the fighting  
lines, 100  
Roll mighty thoughts within so strait a breast,  
Each constant not to yield till of the twain  
One sees the rearward of his routed foes.  
This stirring enterprise, these doughty deeds—  
One little dash of dust, and all is stilled !

But when you have the leaders both recalled  
From battle, put the baser one to death,  
That he, mere spendthrift, cumber not the  
ground,  
And let the better wear his crown alone.

One will be rough, with glittering spots of  
gold; 110

For lo! two kinds: this one of noble mien  
And ruddy-scaled and bright; that slatternly,  
Unkempt, and grovelling and corpulent.  
Two types of kings, two also of the race:  
One gross and horrid, such as may remind  
Of wayfarers who from a cloud of dust  
Thirsty emerge, and spew the cloying dirt  
From drouthy lips; the other shines and gleams,  
All starred with even points of purest gold.  
This is the better stock, sweet honey hence 120  
Your hands shall strain at proper time of year,  
Nor only sweet, but liquid-clear as well,  
And sure to tame the harshness of the grape.

But when the swarms play aimless round the  
sky,  
And spurn the combs, and leave their houses  
cold,  
Keep their light heads from such frivolity.  
Nor is this hard: just pinion both the kings;  
While these remain, not one will dare to rove  
The heaven's high seas or move his flag from  
home.

Let gardens lure with breath of saffron bloom, 130  
And lord Priapus, child of Hellespont,  
Keep guard with willow club for thief and bird.

Who minds such things must carry thyme  
himself,  
And pine-trees from the hills, and plant them  
wide  
Around the colony, himself must wear  
His hands with stubborn toil, himself must set  
Shrubs that will bloom, and spread the genial  
rains.

Even I, were I not shortening my sail  
On labour's utmost confines, hasting now  
To turn my prow to land, would haply sing 140  
The art that makes rich gardens show their  
wealth,  
The rosaries of Pæstum twice in bloom,  
How happy endives gulp the stream, whose  
banks  
Rejoice in parsley green, how cucumbers  
Writhe through the grass, and nobly run to  
paunch.  
Nor had I failed to hymn the arching limbs  
Of bear's-breech and late-flowering daffodils,  
Shore-loving myrtles and the ivy pale.

I mind me once how, 'neath the soaring towers  
Of proud Cæbalia, where Galæsus' stream, 150  
Dark-flowing, gives the golden tilth to drink,  
I saw an ancient man: from Corycus

He hailed ; a few waste fields were all his farm.  
 No plough could make them bear, they fed no  
     beasts,

Nor were they civil to the god of wine.

Yet leek and lentil sparse amid the scrub,

With lily borders, vervain, poppies nice,

His pride in these was regal wealth to him.

When darkness drove him to his hut, his board

Groaned 'neath a feast unbought ; he e'er was  
     first 160

To pluck the vernal rose, the autumn fruit,

And when with sombre winter's lingering cold

Rivers were bridled and rocks splitting still,

He would be gathering the silken tresses

Of hyacinth betimes, with chiding speech

For loitering warmth and west winds all too late.

And so with fruitful hive and frequent swarm

He first was rich ; 'twas he that earliest drew

The exuberant honey from the shrunken comb ;

Lime-trees he had and most luxuriant pines, 170

And what his fruit-trees promised in the flower,

The same in autumn fully formed they bore.

Also late elms he planted out in line,

And pears exceeding hard, and sloe-trees too

Now red with plums, and planes affording shade

Already for carousals. But myself

Unfriendly Time forbids to treat of these :

I leave them here for later lips to sing.



Come now, I will describe the character  
That Jove himself upon the bees impressed ; 180  
What wage they won when, following the sweet  
Clang of Curetan bronze, in Dicte's cave  
They fed the King of Heaven. For they alone  
Share common rights in city, house and child,  
And live beneath the majesty of law ;  
To home and country they alone are true,  
And, mindful of the winter soon to come,  
Work hard in summer, to the common store  
Contributing their gains. For some preside  
O'er getting of the food, and duty-bound 190  
Are busy in the fields ; others indoors  
Fix tears of daffodils and tough bark-glue  
For bases to the combs, then hang thereto  
The sticky wax ; and some escort abroad  
The grown-up sons, the city's hope and crown ;  
And others pack the honeyed excellence  
Close, with pure nectar plumping every cell ;  
And some by lot are warders of the gate,  
And scan the clouds in turn and watch for  
showers,  
Or else relieve home-comers of their load, 200  
Or all unite and chase the lazy drones  
Across the border. On the hot work runs,  
And fragrant combs are redolent of thyme.

When the Cyclopes swiftly forge the bolts.

From yielding ore, some draw and drive the  
wind

With bull's-hide bellows, some in cisterns plunge  
The hissing bronze, while Etna groans beneath  
The anvil's weight; with rhythmic rise and fall  
They ply as one man their tremendous arms,  
Turning the metal with strong pincers' jaws; 210  
So, to compare the little with the great,  
A natural love of property doth urge  
The bees of Cecrops, each in office meet.  
The old have town to keep and comb to fence  
And dædal chambers to construct; the young  
Fly homeward late and weary, heavy-breeched  
With thyme; on arbutus beside they feed,  
Grey willow, ruddy crocus, cassia,  
And sumptuous lime and umber hyacinth.

One rest is set for all, one time of toil: 220  
At dawn they hasten out, none loiter then;  
Again when eve has warned them to depart  
From meadow-pasture, then is shelter sought,  
Then body's wants supplied; buzzings begin,  
And murmured vespers ring round porch and  
door.

After, when chambers have them safe at rest,  
Silence attends them into night, and sleep,  
The sleep they love, broods o'er their tirèd  
limbs.

They go not, when rain threatens, far afield,  
Nor trust the sky when East grows boisterous,  
But, courting safety 'neath the city walls, 231  
Sip water there and make short journeys thence;  
And oft, like yachts which cheat the unsteady  
wave

By ballasting with sand, they lift small stones  
To poise them through the unsubstantial cloud.

'Twill surely wake your wonder to observe  
How bees heed not the joys of sex, nor yield  
To love's soft pleasures, travailing with child,  
But cull their progeny with lips unwed  
From happy leaf and herb; unwed a king 240  
And little citizens they resupply,  
And give new life to hall and waxen realm.  
And oft in wandering o'er the cruel flints  
They fray their wings, and joyfully lay down  
Burden and breath together; so intense  
Their love of flowers and honey's glorious toil.  
And so, though after such a narrow lease  
Death comes (for seven short summers span  
their life),  
Yet aye the race endures: through year on year  
Son, sire and grandsire pass, and fortunes  
stand 250  
Unchanged. And more: not e'en great Lydia,  
Egypt, Hydaspes or the Parthian tribes

So venerate their king. The sovereign safe,  
 One mind rules all. Bereave the bees of him,  
 And social bonds are snapped, with their own  
     jaws

They rend the honeyed fabric, and themselves  
 Tear down the waxen storeys of the comb.  
 He guides the labourers, all worship him  
 And throng about him with innumerable hum  
 Closely, and often raise him on their backs 260  
 And hurl their bodies to the fight, and seek  
 A gallant martyrdom amid the blows.

Following signs and instances like these,  
 Some testify that bees possess a share  
 Of the World-Spirit and the Mind Divine.  
 For God, they say, is immanent in all,  
 Land, sea and sky's immensity; from Him  
 All flocks and herds, wild nature and mankind,  
 Each at their birth, draw down their ghostly  
     lives;

Then all unto the same are rendered back 270  
 At dissolution, nor give room for death,  
 But float up living to the starry heights,  
 And duly there assume the astral form.

Whene'er you break into their little home  
 And filch their hoard, first with a water-draught  
 Rinse face and mouth, and smoke the bees away.

Twice do men gather in the pregnant combs,  
Twice cometh harvest : when Taygete,  
The Pleiad, shews her comely cheek to Earth,  
And spurns with backward heel the ocean  
stream ; 280

Or when she flies before the watery Fish,  
And drops sad-featured into winter's wave.  
Their rage is boundless : when provoked they  
breathe

Poison into their bites, and leave their stings  
Deep buried in the veins, and in the wound  
Lay down their very souls. But if you fear  
Cold winter's rigour, and are provident,  
And have compassion on their bruised hearts  
And shattered fortunes, never doubt e'en then  
To fumigate with thyme and cut away 290  
The empty cells. For oft the combs are  
gnawed

By undetected newts, and cockroaches  
That tabernacle in the darkest nooks,  
And drones that laugh at honest toil, and reap  
Where others sowed ; or hornet rough and rude  
Invades and scorns the impotent defence,  
Or maggots ravage, or Minerva's hate,  
The spider, nets the door with gaping mesh.  
The more they lose, the harder will they strain  
To build anew the ruin of their race, 300  
Loading the flowery garners that they weave.

But if, since nature e'en on bees has laid  
 Our troubles, with the sorrows of disease  
 Their bodies pine, the symptoms will be plain :  
 The sick change colour, visages are marred  
 With hideous leanness ; lo ! they carry out  
 The light-forsaken corpses, and perform  
 Death's melancholy rites ; or haply hang  
 Linked foot in foot before the entrances,  
 Or stay within and close the wicket, all        310  
 Stupid from want and overpowered with cold.  
 Then buzzings deepen in long monotone,  
 As the cold South wind moans through shudder-  
     ing woods,  
 As vexed seas roar when broken waves recoil,  
 As blaze in prisoned furnaces the fires  
 Devouringly. Here will I counsel thus :  
 Burn scented galbanum, and minister  
 Through reeden conduits honey, coaxing them  
 And cheering sufferers to the wonted food.  
 'Twill also help to mingle pounded galls,        320  
 Dried roses, must boiled thick with liberal fire,  
 Or raisins from the Psithian vine, and thyme  
 Cecropian, and the pungent centaury.  
 The meadows know a flower, yclept by swains  
 "The starwort" : 'tis an easy one to find ;  
 For from one root it rears a mighty forest.  
 Its disc is gold ; its many-petaled fringe  
 Pale purple shadowed with dark violet.

Often the altars of the gods are decked  
With chaplets wreathed of it; 'tis rough to  
taste; 330  
In sheep-clipped dells and near the winding  
stream  
Of Mella shepherds gather it. Take thou  
And seethe the roots in fragrant wine, and serve  
Full baskets in the doorway of the hive.

But if a man lose his whole stock at once,  
Nor have wherefrom to found another line,  
Let me declare the famed discovery  
Of Arcady's bee-lord; how oft ere now  
Kine have been slain and from their putrid gore  
A swarm had birth. I will derive the tale, 340  
And carefully unroll it from the source.  
Where Pella's happy-starred Canopians dwell  
Beside the overflow of standing Nile,  
And ride in painted shallops round their farms;  
And where the country feels the leaning side  
Of quivered Persia; and the rushing stream,  
Seven-mouthed at last, that travels all the way  
From dark-faced Indian, spreads its fruitful mud  
And blackens Egypt into living green:  
All dwellers there trust in this art alone. 350  
They choose a little nook all ready-cramped  
To meet the purpose, roof it straitly in  
With crouching tiles, and closely press the walls;

Then add four windows, one for every wind,  
 Catching the light aslant. A steer is sought  
 Whose horns are curling from a two-years' brow ;  
 His nostrils twain and portal of his breath,  
 How hard soe'er he do resist, are blocked ;  
 Then clubbed to death, his flesh, with hide entire,  
 Is pounded to a jelly. Thus confined 360  
 They leave him, placing fresh-plucked cassia  
 And thyme beneath his flank. The deed is done  
 When earliest zephyrs crisp the idle stream,  
 Ere flowering meadows blush with various hue,  
 Ere nesting martins prattle 'neath the eaves.  
 Meantime, within the warm decaying bones  
 The fretful humours rise, and living things  
 In wondrous wise, mere legless trunks at first,  
 Then dight with buzzing wings, swarm to and  
 fro,  
 And clutch the thin air more and more, until 370  
 They volley forth like showers from summer  
 clouds,  
 Or as the leaping bow-strings pour the arrows  
 When Parthian skirmishers invite the charge.

What god, ye Muses, forged for us this art ?  
 Whence sprang its venturous trial ? Thus, ye  
 say :

The shepherd Aristæus lost his bees  
 Through want and sickness, so the fable runs,



And, from Peneian Tempe journeying,  
Stood at the holy river's distant source  
With many a sigh and tear, and with these  
words 380  
Prayed her that bare him: "Hearken, mother  
mine,  
Cyrene, mother, who inhabitest  
These surging deeps, wherefore of seed divine—  
If Thymbra's Phœbus gat thy son indeed—  
Barest thou me the enemy of fate?  
Whither hath fled thy love of me, and why  
Didst bid me hope for heaven? Lo! even this,  
The jewel of my mortal life, wrought out  
Through careful culture of my farm and fold  
And manifold experience of toil, 390  
I leave, even I, thy son. Then loose thy hate:  
Root up with thine own hand my blossoming  
trees,  
Bring cruel fire upon my stalls, consume  
My harvests, burn my seedling crops, and hurl  
The brutal axe upon my darling vines,  
If thus thou'rt wearied with all praise of mine."

But chambered deep beneath the watery dome  
His mother heard. Around her sate the Nymphs,  
Spinning fine fleeces, full-hued, glassy-green,  
Drymo, Ligea and Phyllodoce, 400  
And Xantho, whose bright tresses as a stream

Fell o'er their glistering necks ; Nesæa too,  
 Spio, Thalia and Cymodoce ;  
 Cydippe and gold-haired Lycorias,  
 The one a maid, the other newly proved  
 Beneath Lucina's yoke ; and Beroë  
 And sister Clio, daughters of the Sea,  
 Gold-girdled both and swathed in painted fells ;  
 Ephyre, Opis, and Deïope  
 From Asia's meadows ; and swift Arethuse, 410  
 Her arrows now laid by ; while in their midst  
 Clymene told of Vulcan's idle pain,  
 And Mars's treachery and stolen sweets,  
 And all the thronging love-joys of the gods  
 From Chaos on. As to the enchanted maids  
 Down from the spindles streamed the downy  
 tasks,

Again there sounded in his mother's ears  
 The grief of Aristæus : all the Nymphs  
 Were sore amazèd in their glassy thrones.  
 But, bold before her sisters, Arethuse 420  
 Thrust out her golden head above the wave  
 Spying, and spake afar : "Cyrene dear,  
 Not vain thy fright at such a grievous cry ;  
 Thy very son, whom thou dost chiefly love,  
 Stands by the wave of Father Peneüs  
 Weeping, and calls thee cruel by thy name."  
 To whom his mother, thrilled with strange  
 dismay :

“Come, lead him unto me; ’tis right for him  
To touch the thresholds of the gods.” There-  
with

She bade the abysmal stream stand wide  
apart 430

And give him passage. Him the obedient  
wave,

Bellying into mountain form, encircled,  
And took into its bosom vast, and sent  
Beneath the river. And admiring now  
His mother’s palace and her watery realms,  
And lake-including caves and booming groves  
He fared, and at the deep’s tremendous pulse  
Astounded, saw in diverse quarters all  
The rivers gliding ’neath the mighty earth,  
Phasis and Lycus, and the fount wherefrom 440

Profound Enipeus gushes into light,  
The source of rocky-roaring Hypanis  
And Mysian Caïcus, and whence flows  
Sire Tiber and the Anio’s stream, and he,  
Bull-visaged and with twin horns gilded o’er,  
Eridanus, the fiercest flood that rolls  
Between fat seedlands to the gleaming main.  
When to the chamber ceiled with stalactites  
He gat him, and Cyrene knew her son  
His empty tears, her sisters meetly bring 450  
Pure limpid founts and napkins fine and soft ;  
Some spread in turn rich victuals, and set out

Full flagons, while the altars reek with fume  
 Of Arab incense-fires. Then quoth Cyrene :  
 " Take beakers of the Lydian wine and pour  
 To Ocean." Saying thus, she prayed herself  
 To Ocean, sire of all things, and the Nymphs,  
 Sisters, whereof a hundred keep the woods,  
 A hundred keep the rivers. Thrice she drenched  
 The blazing hearth with liquid nectar, thrice 460  
 The flame shone roofwards and shone back  
 again.

Cheering his heart with this herself began :  
 " In Neptune's realm, 'neath the Carpathian  
 wave,  
 There dwells a seer, blue Proteus, who with  
 team  
 Of fishy steeds, two-footed, travels o'er  
 The vasty deep. He now revisiteth  
 His own Pallene and Emathia's ports.  
 We Nymphs and, yea, e'en Nereus full of years,  
 Do homage to him ; for he knoweth all,  
 What was and is and what is soon to be ; 470  
 'Twas so that Neptune willed, whose monstrous  
 herd  
 Of ugly sea-cows 'neath the surge he feeds.  
 Capture him first with chains, my son, that so  
 He may unfold the cause of this disease,  
 And give thee hope of weal ; for without force

He gives no tittle of advice, nor him  
 Shalt thou with praying soften ; capture him  
 And force upon him fetters shrewd and sure :  
 With these his ruses shall be turned to nought.  
 But I myself, 'neath hottest noonday sun, 480  
 When pastures thirst and cattle seek the shade,  
 Will guide thee to the ancient sire's retreat,  
 Whither he hies him weary from the wave,  
 That as in sleep he lies thou mayst attack  
 Full easily. But when thou hast him gripped  
 With hand and chain, then divers beastly shapes  
 Will mock thy power. For he will suddenly  
 Turn into bristled boar or tigress dire,  
 Scaled dragon or a tawny lioness,  
 Or crackle sharply into flame, and so 490  
 Elude thy bonds, or into water glide  
 And thinly ooze away. As oft as he  
 Change him to every shape, so oft do thou  
 Tighten the clasping fetters, till his limbs  
 Assume that form wherein thou sawest him  
 When sleep's beginning lightly hid his eyes."

She spake, and shed ambrosia's liquid scent,  
 Steeping her son's whole being in the fume ;  
 O'er his unruffled hair a sweet breath moved,  
 And buxom vigour leaped into his limbs. 500  
 Scooped in the hollow of a mountain's side  
 A long cove lies, where many a wind-borne wave

Drives all its length and crumbles far within ;  
 'Tis matchless anchorage in time of stress.  
 Proteus himself is wont to lurk within,  
 Behind a massive boulder. Here the Nymph  
 Within a sunless alcove hid the youth,  
 While she herself amid a cloud afar  
 Stood secret. Now the bane of thirsty Ind,  
 The savage Dog-star, blazed, and th' ardent  
     Sun 510  
 Had drunk the middle of his aëry course ;  
 Parched was the herb, and with the growing  
     heat  
 The hollow dry-lipped river-beds were baked  
 Down to the mud : when Proteus from the waves  
 Came up to seek the cavern that he knew.  
 Round him the great sea's dewy offspring  
     frisked,  
 Scattering wide the bitter brine ; the seals  
 Sprawled into sleep at random on the beach.  
 He, like some watcher of a mountain fold,  
 When evening brings the calves from pasture  
     home, 520  
 And wolves wax keener at the bleat of lambs,  
 Sate him amid them on a central rock  
 And told their tale. When Aristæus saw  
 His chance, scarce suffering age to lay to rest  
 Its weary limbs, rushed on him with a shout,  
 And forced the handcuffs on him as he lay.

He, unforgetful of his wizardry,  
Changed into every kind of marvel, fire,  
Dread beast and flowing stream. But when his  
guile

Found no escape, he sought himself again 530

Baffled, and lastly spake with human lips :

“Presumptuous youth, pray, who hath bidden  
thee

Enter my courts? What wouldest thou from  
here?”

But he replied : “Proteus, thou, thou dost know,  
Nor canst deceive me aught ; so cease thy shifts.

By divine precept led I came to ask

A prophet’s rede for fortunes in distress.”

He spake and ceased. Thereat, ’neath hard  
constraint,

Rolling his burning eyes of lustrous grey

And gnashing on him grievously, the seer 540

Thus loosed his tongue to prophecy at last :

“Vengeance divine pursues thee ; great the  
crime

That thou dost purge : far short of thy deserts

These penalties, unless Fate interpose,

Unhappy Orpheus urges on thee, wroth

To madness at the stealing of his bride.

For she, poor doomèd girl, in headlong flight

Along the rivers to escape from thee,

Saw not before her in the herbage tall  
 A monstrous hydra, tenant of the banks. 550  
 But Dryad maids, boon comrades of her age,  
 Crowned with their cries the lofty hills; sor-  
     rowed  
 The peaks of Rhodope and high Pangæa,  
 Thrace, land of Mars, and Hebrus, Getan tribe,  
 And Acte's Orithyia. He himself,  
 Solacing love's despair with hollow lyre,  
 Sang ' Ah ! sweet wife, sweet wife ! ' from dawn  
     till eve,  
 From dawn till eve lone on the lonely strand.  
 E'en Tænarus' jaws, the lofty gates of Dis,  
 And the black grove replete with dreadful  
     night 560  
 He entered, and sought converse with the dead,  
 And the awful king, and hearts that never bend  
 To human prayers. But, startled by his song,  
 From lowest mansions of dark Erebus  
 Came subtle shades and light-forsaken wraiths,  
 As myriad birds that nestle in the leaves  
 Countless, when evening or a wintry shower  
 Has driven them from the mountains : mothers  
     and men,  
 And great-souled heroes who have lived their  
     lives,  
 And boys and unwed maids, and youths whose  
     pyre 570



Burned in a father's and a mother's sight ;  
Round whom the swart mud and the loathly  
reed,

And slow unlovely welter of Cocytus  
As fetters lie, and nine times interfused  
Styx wardeth them. Even inmost Tartarus,  
Death's very shrine, e'en the Eumenides,  
Their hair with blue snakes broidered, saw and  
feared,

And Cerberus held his triple mouth agape,  
And stilled winds made Ixion's wheel to stand.  
Now he had turned his steps and safely  
passed 580

All danger, and restored Eurydice  
Was coming to the outer air, behind  
Following,—for so Proserpina decreed—  
When sudden madness seized her thoughtless  
spouse,

Sin pardonable sure, could Hell condone :  
He stood, and 'neath the very shores of light,  
(Alas for memory and for mind's control !)  
Looked back on his Eurydice. Poured out  
Was all his toil, broken the mutual bond  
Given by the lord inexorable, and thrice 590  
The Avernian waters rumbled through and  
through.

'Orpheus,' she cried, 'what frenzy hath undone  
Thee and thy wretched wife? Lo! back again



Makes heard the burden of her piteous tale.  
 No love, no wedlock bent his soul again.  
 Alone he roamed the Hyperborean ice, 620  
 The snowy Tanaïs and regions aye  
 Unwidowed of Rhipæan frost, wailing  
 For lost Eurydice and gifts of Dis  
 Made giftless ; but offended by his faith,  
 Ciconian ladies in a festal night,  
 Revelling in the Bacchanalian rout,  
 In fragments rended him and strewed his limbs  
 The wide fields o'er. Torn from its marble neck  
 Cæagrian Hebrus bore the head adown  
 The middle of his flood, and as it rolled 630  
 The cold tongue and the orphan voice were  
 crying,  
 ' Eurydice, ah, poor Eurydice !'  
 ' Eurydice,' with fleeting breath they called,  
 And all the way the banks gave back the name."  
 Thus Proteus spake, and deeply dived away ;  
 And where he dived the bubbles rose and foamed  
 Around the wreathèd splash.  
 Not so Cyrene ;  
 For she unprayed made answer to his fear :  
 " Son, cast away thy melancholy mood.  
 Here is the cause of thy disease, for this 640  
 The Nymphs with whom she used to thread the  
 dance  
 In the high groves, did send upon thy bees

That miserable doom. Hold out thy gifts  
 And sue for peace and pardon ; supplicate  
 The gracious Dell-Nymphs, who will hear thy  
     vows,

And grant forgiveness, and forsake their ire.

But firstly in meet order I will tell

The method of thy prayer. Choose out four bulls  
 Unblemished, passing large, from thine that  
     graze

The heights of green Lycæus ; add to these 650  
 Four heifers never humbled to the yoke.

Four altars at the goddesses' high fanes

Create for them, and from their throats let fall

The holy blood-stream, and the carcasses

Leave in a shady grove. But afterwards,

When the ninth morning hath unveiled her  
     brows,

Lethæan poppies, death-gifts, thou shalt send

To Orpheus, and a black-wooled sheep shalt  
     slay,

Then seek the grove once more and sacrifice

A cow-calf to the appeased Eurydice." 660

He lingers not, but swiftly carries out

His mother's precepts : to the shrine he fares,

And rears the altars four and leads four bulls

Unblemished, passing large, and adds to these

Four heifers never humbled to the yoke.

When the ninth morning has unveiled her brows,



“Optima quaeque dies miseris mortalibus aevi  
Prima fugit.”

The fairest morns are swiftest to decay,  
    Soon hushed the babblings of their tender hours,  
    Sullied the bee's clear wing, faded the flowers,  
And Now rides o'er the grave of Yesterday.  
But Memory's treasures shall not pass away,  
    Nor shall Time turn her sweetness into sour ;  
    Though castles crumble 'neath his wasteful power,  
Fame weaves the amaranthine wreath of bay.  
And I, whose barbarous tongue makes bold to sing  
    The song of Mantua, glorying to fulfil  
    Inglorious leisure lent by body's ill,  
Lay down my task, but not my glorying.  
    I pass ; but Mantua's reed shall murmur still,  
And in rapt ears ambrosial music ring.













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